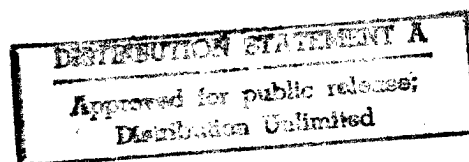


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10 June 1985

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ARMENIAN AFFAIRS

TURKEY'S STRONG REACTION TO PRAVDA ARTICLE ON GENOCIDE

Istanbul MARMARA in Armenian 26 Apr 85 pp 1, 4

[Article: "Turkey's Sharp Reaction to Moscow: Ankara Lodges Protest Against PRAVDA"]

[Text] Ankara has sharply protested an article on the Armenian "Genocide" appearing in PRAVDA. With this article, published in an official Soviet organ, the Soviets have for the first time taken such a clear and definite position on this issue, supporting assertions of an Armenian Genocide. Ankara responded with an equally tough reply, accusing the Soviet Union of taking a position paralleling that of the Armenian terrorists.

The PRAVDA article, in the title of which the assertion is made that the genocide perpetrated against the Armenians is condemned by all mankind, is written by S. Hambartsumian, director of the Armenian Republic's Yerevan State University and member of the Armenian Academy of Sciences. This article repeats assertions of an Armenian Genocide, stating that "the greatest crime committed against mankind is the crime of genocide, and the greatest genocide committed by the imperialist movement was the genocide perpetrated 70 years ago against the Armenian population by the leaders of Ottoman Turkey, as a consequence of which more than one and a half million innocent people lost their lives."

The article mentions the developments and progress recorded to date in the Armenian Republic and relates how Armenians served in World War II.

At the end of the article criticism is leveled at the United States for supporting allegations denying the fact of occurrence of the Armenian Genocide. The author of the PRAVDA article mentions that in some quarters it is insistently claimed that no genocide took place, but that the Armenians were merely displaced. The writer states in conclusion that the United States has perpetrated like genocides in Vietnam or [sic] Nicaragua.

The Foreign Ministry expressed regret in its statement released yesterday that the Soviet Union is going along with the Armenian terrorists. The Foreign Ministry stated that the article is grounded on false and unfounded accusations leveled against Turkey and that it is regrettable that space is devoted in an official Soviet organ to such allegations.

The Foreign Ministry noted that such articles do not serve to promote friendly Turkish-Soviet relations. Ankara has not yet, however, lodged any official protest with the Soviet Embassy in Ankara.

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CSO: 4605/163

EGYPT

LEFTIST JOURNAL CRITICIZES NEW ECONOMIC POLICIES

Cairo AL-AHALI in Arabic 17 Apr 85 pp 5, 9

/Article by Ibrahim al-'Isawi: "The Grievous Results and Significance of the New Economic Decrees: The April Decrees Are an Official Declaration of the Return of the Dominance of Government by Capital"/

/Text/ The National Party cabinet, on January 1985, declared a number of economic decrees which currency dealers, importers and men in the joint and private banks and other new economic and political centers of gravity considered in effect a serious coup d'etat in economic policy, ending the era of welfare and freedom and bringing the country back to the era of introversion and restrictions.

On April 1985 the cabinet of the same party issued three new decrees bringing the conditions for regulating dealings in foreign currency and imports back before 5 January. This inspired joy and contentment in the spirits of the new centers of gravity and renewed their confidence in the continuation of the chaos of liberalization in which they find a fertile pasture for the people who have grown rapidly rich.

Although I was not greatly enraptured by the issuance of the January decrees (see AL-AHALI, 13 January 1985), I was extremely distressed by the issuance of the countervailing decrees in the month of April. In spite of the positive elements the January decrees contained, which cannot be denied, these decrees were fragmentary and the object of procrastination and their execution was begun in an economic environment filled with loopholes and obstacles, in the shadow of a totally hostile climate. Therefore, I considered that these decrees were doomed to fail, and indeed could lead us to a state which would not be much better than the one we had been in before 5 January, unless the government hastened to follow after them with additional decrees which would fill the loopholes and get the obstacles out of the way. This did not happen, and we did not expect it would happen, in the light of our understanding of the government's program for dealing with economic problems and in the light of our observation of the increasing grandeur of the influence of the new power centers on the one hand and the increasing propensity on the part of the government to be sympathetic with it and show feelings of affection toward it on the other.

The cause of my extreme distress over the April decrees is not just the measures these decrees contain, which will bring the hands of the clock back before 5 January, but, in addition to that, the change the issuance of these decrees entails in the balance of political forces and the economic decision-making system on the one hand and the nature of the new trend in economic policy, of which these decrees are considered just a beginning, on the other.

The Substance of the New Decrees

Let us look first of all at the April decrees and their increasing relevance to the January decrees in order to discern whether there was a justification for the statement that an economic retrenchment had occurred on the part of the government and that there had been a capitulation to the influence of liberalization era capital and other new power centers.

One, Decree 167: This decree replaced Decree Three for 1985, which called for the establishment of a committee to set the prices of foreign currency (to be accurate, to determine the variable surcharge to be added to the declared exchange rate) and compelled the authorized banks to furnish the receipts of foreign currency they had collected by accumulating savings from people working abroad to the Central Bank at the exchange rate the committee determined. The new decree retained this committee, though changing its name to "a room in the Central Bank." However, there are important differences between the two decrees. The new decree:

A. Has eliminated the authorized banks' commitment to furnish the foreign currency in their possession accumulated from the savings of Egyptians abroad to the Central Bank; they will be given the chance to use that directly for financing import operations.

B. Has reduced the influence given to the government in this "room" by reducing the number of Ministry of Economy and Central Bank representatives from two members apiece to one. Thus the relative influence of the representatives of the joint and private banks, that is, the Egyptian private sector, has increased from one-third (four out of 12 members) to 40 percent (four out of 10 members). It is worth noting that the joint and private banks are represented by a number of members equal to the number representing the four public sector commercial banks, although the latter still control three-quarters of the activity of the banking system, as stated in the Central Bank's annual report for the year 1983-84.

Two, Decree 168: This is the replacement to Decree Four for 1985 regarding the determination of revenues and disbursements to which the exchange rates spelled out under the jurisdiction of the abovementioned "room" apply. The difference between the two decrees is restricted to the new decree's:

A. Placing the disbursement of the corpus of foreign currency revenues for payment of the commitments resulting from loans and facilities "within the limits of the quotas stipulated in the foreign currency budget in effect,

except for that which is paid out of the corpus of foreign currency in the possession of the Central Bank." I hope I am not wrong in interpreting this stipulation as being aimed at restricting the right of the government and the public sector to disburse the new corpus of foreign currency revenues.

B. Permitting the accredited banks to conduct sale and purchase transactions in foreign currency among themselves at the exchange rates the abovementioned "room" specifies.

C. Compelling the accredited banks to supply reserves in their possession at the end of each week's activities which have not been disbursed to an account opened for this purpose in an accredited bank, provided that disbursement to this account be subjected to the Central Bank instructions countermanding the requirement made by Decree Three for 1985 compelling the accredited banks to furnish all their foreign exchange receipts to the Central Bank. Of course, the compulsion that the accredited banks supply 25 percent of the foreign currency receipts to the Central Bank has been suspended.

Three, Decree 169: This replaces Decree Five for 1985 regarding the method of financing imports. The new decree permits:

A. Importation by the private sector, through any bank operating in Egypt, within the limits of the activities which each is permitted to exercise, while the old decree required that imports be carried out through accredited banks only. This means that import activities are allowed to be carried out through unaccredited banks as well, such as the Arab International Bank, for instance.

B. The payment by importers of the sum of the allocations bearing on imports and the cash insurance rates in foreign currency, while Decree Five of the January decrees stipulated payment in Egyptian pounds, with the proviso that the banking system would take charge of procuring the foreign currency needed. This is one of the most dangerous amendments the new decrees have come up with.

This is because it brings the system of imports without the transfer of hard currency back once again and reopens the door to the promotion of commerce in foreign currency--indeed imparts a sort of legitimacy to it.

The Economic Consequences

Thus what wholly moderate economists warned of, and deplored, has come about, in the wake of the departure of Dr Mustafa al-Sa'id from the ministry and his replacement by Dr Sultan Abu 'Ali. For example Dr 'Abd-al-Jalil al-'Amri (in AL-AHRAM, 3 April 1985), warned that "Anger at them (that is, the January decrees) will prompt us to hasten to issue decrees going back to the past." In spite of his belief that the prices of hard currencies should be left to be set by the force of supply and demand, Dr al-'Amri, frankly and clearly, deplored "the adoption of the principle of importing without the transfer of foreign currency," because that is "a system with many flaws."

However, the presence of wills stronger than the desires of moderate economists, and government hesitation, resolved matters in the direction of a retreat, and the measures adopted to begin restoring respect to the Egyptian pound after it had become weak and loathed in its own nation were forsaken. In addition, the confrontation of hard currency dealers was abandoned, their influence was surrendered to, and the country returned to the chaos of importing without the transfer of hard currency. Indeed, it became apparent to us from Mr Ibrahim Nafi's discussion in AL-AHRAM (5 April 1985) that "it did not occur to the cabinet to prohibit imports without the transfer of hard currency and this phrase was not raised at any of its meetings or meetings of the technical committees which were assigned the task (the task of preparing the January decrees)!"

Whatever one's opinion regarding the actual effects of the January decrees might be, it is necessary to admit that they were only a partial, limited response to the demand for economic reform which assumed concrete form at the economic conference more than 3 years ago. It is also necessary to admit that they entailed measures which capitalist countries of long standing resort to adopting in a harsher form, more protective of their currencies and economies, in times of stress, to prevent the accumulation of foreign debts and the aggravation of disruptions in the balance of payments. In spite of the deliberate confusion engendered by importers, merchants and businessmen in mounting a rush on the import committee and keeping goods off markets, the result of these decrees in no case reached the ugly picture Dr Ibrahim 'Abduh painted in the newspaper AL-WAFD (11 April 1985) when he said "The Egyptian economy has been flooded, the country has approached famine and crusts of bread soaked in ripe cheese and gruel have become precious to most citizens!"

On the basis of expectations of businessmen and importers themselves (AL-AHRAM, 13 April 1985), a great rise in the price of the dollar will result from the April decrees, because of the flagrant nature of the demand which was pent up over the past 3 months and the competition among banks and individuals to buy hard currencies from currency dealers. Of course the rise in the price of the dollar will lead to an increase in the flames of inflation, which is ravenously devouring the limited buying power of poor people and people with limited incomes.

As a result of these two matters, a new, harsh blow will be directed at the 5-year plan (following the blow of the drop in oil prices and the blow of the decline in the remittances of people working abroad). Above and beyond that, there is the difficulty of realizing the calculations in the plan in the context of a system of exchange rates which vary in accordance with circumstances and considerations which it is not easy to predict and in the context of severe fluctuations in the system of imports, and the instability and doubts with which both are surrounded.

It is a truly strange anomaly that while the government is declaring its adherence to planning and its effort to consolidate its foundations, it is proceeding to sabotage the planning environment and putting obstacles before the people setting out the plan, by means of instability in the foreign

trade and foreign currency sector. We do not know how long the government will vacillate between the planning program and the program of a free market in directing economic activity.

The Political Significance

Although the nature of the economic consequences of the April decrees is dangerous, their political significance is still more dangerous. It is well known that the January decrees did not collapse under the efforts of ghosts, but rather that specific forces caused them to fail; these led the offensive until their efforts were crowned with success in the issuance of the April decrees. Self-interested persons in the form of importers, people in joint and private banks and employers drew up a regular, organized onslaught on the January decrees in the course of the past 3 months, using all types of pressure on the government and all methods, including the withholding of foreign currency and commodities from the market and the spread of fear of occurrence of the catastrophe of suspended production, and ending with the catastrophe of the unavailability of nuts and dried fruit during the blessed month of Ramadan!

The fact is that the issuance of the April decrees is to be considered a historic milestone on the road of the growth of Egyptian capitalism, since the substance of the decrees and the method the new centers of gravity have used to get them issued are to be considered a preliminary frank declaration that the country is returning to the stage of the dominance of government by capital.

The most venerable will perhaps remember that the 23 July 1952 revolution sought "to eliminate monopoly and the dominance of government by capital," the third of the famous six principles. The fair-minded will remember that a period of time passed in Egypt when the dominance of government by capitalists, while not ending, was to a large extent reduced.

Although the influence of major capitalists, and other principal figures in the new centers of gravity, started to increase in tangible fashion in the past 10 years, their strength as an organized group has been exerted on the stage in strong coordination on a basis of careful planning and they do not have a belief in operating in "the wings"; this is embodied in the number of organizations which have just appeared in the past few months, some of which rely for their strength on the presence of foreign elements or aid. The most minor example of this is in the increasing weakness of the government vis-a-vis the group of self-interested people and its submission to their demands under the pressure of threats and deception at times and enticements from the interests common to the new centers of gravity and certain people in positions of authority at other times.

In the past it did not happen that the government openly exerted the unremitting efforts we have become aware of to seek to satisfy self-interested bankers, importers and businessmen whose benefit to the national economy is not certain, and whose detriment to the public interest of the society has been proved in part.

The striking thing is that the new centers of power have not contented themselves with the issuance of the April decrees, which are of service to their interests, but have been concerned to increase their proportional representation in the committee setting the prices of foreign currencies, and have succeeded in their efforts, as was previously stated. It is an anomaly which inspires thought that here the prime minister, instead of hastening to meet with the people's representatives to explain the reasons for and goals of the new decrees and to hear their views on them, is meeting on the same day these decrees were issued with the chairmen of private sector banks (the minority) and the joint and private banks (the majority) not just to review the new measures (AL-AHRAM, 8 April 1985) but also to review "areas of economic policy the government will follow over the short and long range" (AL-AKHBAR, 8 April 1985).

Expectations of What Is To Come

We must, in the light of what has happened, expect a greater rate of repetition of friendly encounters and meetings of consultation and understanding between the new centers of gravity and the government. We must, subsequently, expect that these forces will make a greater contribution and have a stronger influence in directing economic policy and making economic policy decisions. It is expected that the April decrees will be followed by other additional ones, on the claim that they will restore trust in the Egyptian economy and provide a healthy climate for private investment, while in reality they will serve only the personal interests of the new power centers.

The most important distinguishing feature of these decrees is that many things will be left to the forces of supply and demand. This is the "step that remains," in the words of the new minister of economy just before his appointment (AKHBAR AL-YAWM, 30 March 1985), that is, eliminating the committee to set exchange rates and leaving "the receipts of the group of commercial banks to the forces of supply and demand, so that a realistic price will thereby be determined." However, this, in the view of the new minister of economy, will require the provision of a suitable reserve of foreign exchange, in agreement with the International Monetary Fund.

In other words, the situation requires the receipt of a loan from the fund which will add to the height of the mountain of existing foreign loans and will consequently increase the fund's chances to dominate Egypt and impose its conditions on it (eliminating subsidies, shrinking the public sector, preparing a better climate for foreign investment, and so forth).

In addition to the above, it is expected that the committees to guide imports will be eliminated, and initiatives have actually been started to exempt a number of commodities from submission to these committees, on the claim that they are production accessories (for the production of what?). It is also expected that there will be an obvious effort to realize "complete independence for the Central Bank in supervising monetary policy," while the real goal is to remove the Central Bank from the framework of its customary role,

which is to guide monetary and credit policies in a manner serving the public interest, and to enlist it in the service of the interests of the new power centers. It is also expected that the government's conduct toward importers and businessmen as far as taxes and customs duties are concerned will be characterized by leniency and flexibility.

The strange thing as far as some of these tendencies are concerned, especially the propensity to elevate the status of the forces of the market and leave matters to supply and demand, is that they will bring the country back not just to conditions before January 1985 but also to conditions with which Egypt was not familiar even in the era of colonialism and the monarchy.

It is not reasonable that Egypt 40 years ago, in the context of the monarchy, free capitalism and English colonialism, should have adopted the system of the forces of surveillance over foreign currency, while, in the era of economic guidance and comprehensive planning, it is oriented toward the provision of freedom to deal in foreign currency and determine its price through supply and demand. It is not reasonable that Egypt should talk about complete freedom for the Central Bank while that has not come about even in a capitalist country of long standing like England, where the Central Bank is supposed to assume charge of supervising monetary and credit policy and guiding it by proxy for the government. Since this matter is considered one of the rights of the government's economic sovereignty, it is not reasonable, as a conservative English expert has stated, that a responsible government should relinquish such rights to an independent body such as a central bank or other entity. Finally, these matters and orientations are contrary to the country's constitution, which stipulates that the guidance of the economy should be in accordance with a comprehensive development plan and in the context of the people's dominance of the means of production!

However, it is worth pointing out that the realization of these expectations is contingent on leaving the new centers of power the scope to roam about and grace in and maintaining the obvious weakness in the front of national forces defending the interests of the masses of the people and the true development of the Egyptian economy. Therefore the national forces must join ranks and enter into solidarity for the sake of exposing the developments which are taking place in the balance of economic and political power, underline the change which has occurred in the method of economic decisionmaking and mobilize the people's efforts to thwart the schemes of the new centers of gravity and rally around a program to save the Egyptian economy from collapse, liberate it from the clutches of parasites and the snare of subservience, and put it on the heights overlooking the road toward real development.

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CSO: 4504/320

EGYPT

CENSORSHIP OF 'ARABIAN NIGHTS' STORIES DISCUSSED

Cairo ROSE AL-YUSUF in Arabic 29 Apr 85 pp 44-50

[Article by Fatmah 'Inan: "'One Thousand and One Nights' on Trial; Is this a Political or a Cultural Case?"]

[Text] Mustafa Amin: "Delete references to sexual organs in medical books!"

Anis Mansur: "Burning 'One Thousand and One Nights' would be scandalous."

Salah Jahin: "I oppose the burning of any book that is part of our heritage."

Ahmad Bahjat: "The books that make up our heritage must be purged of anything that offends modesty."

Midhat 'Asim: "Shall we burn the books of jurisprudence because they discussed intercourse?"

Ahmad Shalabi: "More corruption is caused by movies and video cassettes than by what is mentioned in 'One Thousand and One Nights'."

Tharwat Abazah: "We refuse to have battles waged against our heritage, and we will not allow it to be distorted."

Fathi Sa'id: "Our heritage is like the constitution; no one should touch it!"

Salah Tahir: "The implications of burning books are evil; the best thing for those who are demanding that books be burned is emotional and spiritual therapy!"

My poor heart is grieving! I find myself in the midst of a raging storm that seems to be engulfing us all. The intense turmoil makes us forget our duties; it even makes us forget ourselves as we proceed to call each other names and accuse each other indiscriminately. Some of us find fault with each other, and we

accuse each other of selling out and of treason. Then someone says, "This is a hard-line tendency from the past that must be stopped in its tracks."

But even though my heart is heavy with sorrow, let me tell everybody, "Listen, we are all Egyptians. We all have the same motive. We love this country. We love an Egypt that flourishes under the values of truth, virtue and beauty."

Wouldn't it be more effective to hold a trial, for example, for war criminals in Afghanistan as a sign of Islamic solidarity against Soviet aggression in that country? Wouldn't it be more effective to champion the Afghan people's right to determine their own destiny than to hold a trial such as that which is being held for the book, "One Thousand and One Nights?"

Wouldn't it have been more useful if the demands that are being made to burn the book, "One Thousand and One Nights," were being made instead to burn those who annihilated Sabra and Shatila and liquidated Palestinian refugees in Lebanon?

Wouldn't it be more just to call for the death of those who are still firing shots against Arabs and renewing the fighting in Lebanon? Wouldn't it be more just to call for the death of those who are stirring the fires of the endless war between Muslims in Iraq and Iran?

Unfortunately, however, we seem to have forgotten the real and basic issue; our guns are being fired at random, and we are not aiming our fire at the target. Instead, we are shooting ourselves, and that reminds us of the case of bad weapons in the 1948 war.

Therefore, I am asking you to be reasonable and to bear with me so that we can listen in a civilized manner to what some of us think. Let us consult with each other, as our noble messenger commanded us. Let us understand the point of view of those who will become part of our heritage, which is on trial today. Let us come to a sound judgment on this matter, which has to do with the book, "One Thousand and One Nights." Today, that book is on trial for its life, and the prosecution is asking for its execution by fire!

It were as though the short circuit that caused the Opera house, al-Jawharah Palace and Muhammad Farid Theater to burn down were not enough! Now we are coming out to set fire to the book, "One Thousand and One Nights!"

Does this make sense?

Dreams of the Middle Class

The intellectual author, Anis Mansur says, "I object to the burning of any book, especially if that book has historical value such as that which 'One Thousand and One Nights' has, simply because it differs in form and content from what is customary. The 'One Thousand and One Nights' embodies the daydreams of the middle class in Egypt, Iraq, Iran and India. It is a historical text whose author is unknown. It does not matter very much to us whether that book was translated from Persian or Indian or gleaned from these two languages. What does matter is that this book has become valuable and that it has a life of its own. It has become a source of inspiration for many literary, dramatic and

musical works. It is enough that one can listen to 'Scheherezade' by the Russian composer, Rimsky Korsakov and enjoy similar works by other luminaries in music and art."

The journalist Mustafa 'Abd-al-Ghani says, "'One Thousand and One Nights' is unique in our Arab heritage. It is quite extraordinary that in spite of that, 8 centuries after that book was judged to be unique, the book is on trial in a morals court! What is even more unusual is that the artistic censor's reports indicate that 'One Thousand and One Nights' was stealthily and unofficially brought into the country. However, after the book was apprehended and placed on trial, the censor's reports refuted earlier reports and stated that the book had been brought into the country in an official manner. It is natural that such contradiction and confusion would confirm that the authorities responsible for culture in Egypt cannot determine the value of 'One Thousand and One Nights' and that they are shirking the task of determining who was responsible."

Ibrahim Shalabi, a poet, politician and vice president of the Consultative Council says, "If there has to be a controversy surrounding 'One Thousand and One Nights,' it is a controversy that came centuries too late. This book is part of our popular literary heritage and our artistic cultural heritage as well. It has been read by many generations since the Middle Ages. No objections have ever been made to the book throughout these centuries. No protests about the book's manifestations of corruption or its offenses against modesty, such as those that are being made now, were ever made."

No Criminal Effects

The competent radio announcer, Muhammad Mahmud Sha'ban, also known as Baba Sharu, was associated with "One Thousand and One Nights" on radio from 1954 to 1957. He says that the book, "One Thousand and One Nights" is a collection of stories that soften the impact of real events. "These stories are didactic; they give man advice; and they criticise all the evils that have been known throughout the ages. All this is obvious to a discerning reader. Therefore, this book has never had a criminal effect on people throughout the centuries. We never heard of anyone who read the book and heard or saw [a dramatization of] it committing a murder or a rape. Our world is completely different from that which is portrayed in the stories of the book: the world of Waq al-Waq islands and Mount Qaf. That world is one that is inhabited by demons and creatures that associate with them. Should we let the book, 'One Thousand and One Nights' be burned, or should we wake up instead to the painful reality that would extinguish our youth?"

The musician Midhat 'Asim says, "I found myself smiling bitterly and sarcastically when I heard the news that's been reported about the demands that are being made to burn 'One Thousand and One Nights'. It is a great Egyptian, Arab work whose greatness has been recognized by the whole world, the East and the West. It is a work that inspired books and studies as well as artists, intellectuals, musicians and creative artists. I don't know why, but when I heard the news, I thought of the Spanish Inquisition. We know what that band of ignorant fanatics used to do about all forms of thought, science, literature and art. I also thought of Russia under the czars: it was a country dominated by an oppressive, tyrannical group that claimed knowledge of divine laws, which have nothing to do with these oppressors. I also remembered what happened to major

scientists, like Galileo and Newton, and to artists like Leonardo da Vinci and others. To reassure myself I told myself that this was nothing but a dark cloud that has enveloped the minds of a few. I told myself that cloud would soon dissipate and be dispelled by the light of science, knowledge and religion."

The Artist of Sexual Passion

Poet Fathi Sa'id wonders, "Are we putting our heritage on trial? Are we putting on trial our ancestors who tried to clear a path for successive generations? And who then will protect these generations from the rashness of an officer who decides to fight against the books of our heritage? Who will protect these generations from such an officer who may block a book of poems, a painting, a work of art or a statue that he does not like?

"What should the association of writers do to resist such abuse? How can the prosecution in the case of 'One Thousand and One Nights' accuse AL-IDHA'AH WA AL-TILIFIZYUN Magazine and a poet like me of treason? How can we be accused of selling out and accepting bribes because we discussed this matter?

"How can the prosecution accuse a major artist like Salah Jahin of being an artist of sexual passion? How can it charge that he was arrested in Baligh Hamdi's apartment, when he wasn't? How can such charges be leveled against Salah Jahin because he commented in a cartoon on the fact that the prosecution was demanding that the book, 'One Thousand and One Nights' be burned?

"Our heritage, like the constitution, must not be touched or amended. Our heritage is part of people's lives; it is part of the civilization of nations."

The literary author, Tharwat Abazah, president of the association of literary authors replies, "I asked the public attorney about that, and he told me that the text of 'One Thousand and One Nights' has been altered. If that is true, then we support the prosecution against those who altered our heritage, which must remain unaltered so it can be called our heritage. But if the text of the book has not been altered, then we do not accept the prosecution's contention, and we reject it completely."

The satirical artist, Salah Jahin says, "Fifteen attorneys have joined the prosecution in the case against the book, 'One Thousand and One Nights' because they are quite concerned about public morals. They leveled scores of charges against me at the trial, and they discredited me and called me an artist of sexual passions. They associated my name with the Baligh Hamdi scandal, and I am innocent of all that. All that happened because of several cartoons I made, which were printed in AL-AHRAM. In these cartoons I expressed my view about burning the book, 'One Thousand and One Nights,' and I took the position of defending the book. What really concerns me is action to block and extinguish that demand that the book be burned. As an artist, the thought of burning a book, a work of art or a literary work that is part of our human heritage and Arab folklore bothers me."

Anis Mansur comments on this and says, "No one has called for the burning of a book since the Middle Ages and since the days of the Inquisition in Spain. No one has demanded that a book be burned since the days of the Nazis in Germany

and Europe and the days of McCarthy in the United States! This is disgraceful and unbecoming of the freedom of human thought. If we maintain we had nothing to do with the fire that caused the Alexandria library to burn down, condoning such thoughts as those that are being entertained about 'One Thousand and One Nights' makes that charge stick to us even though we are historically quite innocent and had nothing to do with that fire."

Mustafa Amin says, "I think that if we were to burn 'One Thousand and One Nights,' we would have to burn the Sphinx because he is an ancient Egyptian god. We would also have to burn Abu Simbel because pagan temples must not survive. We would also have to burn the pyramid because it is a temple where the dead were buried. To put it briefly, we would have to destroy our own history."

The Artistic Expression of Sex

The writer Ahmad Bahjat replies, "I am not advocating that the book, 'One Thousand and One Nights' be burned, but I am advocating that the copy which contains explicit sexual references be confiscated. That copy is a very old one. The artistic expression of sex is not objectionable, as long as that work of art is truly fine art. There are, for example, erotic scenes in some movies that no one objects to since they are an integral part of the artistic work itself and are ultimately part of its structure. There is a difference between such a movie and pornographic movies that have absolutely nothing to do with art. Art is the standard here. In other words, does the work of art lose its balance when these scenes are deleted or not?

"The book, 'One Thousand and One Nights' begins with [a scene in which] Shahriyar is betrayed by his wife. It is this betrayal that induced Shahriyar later to marry a woman every night and to turn her over to the executioner the following morning. Must this betrayal be so explicitly described as it is in the old versions of the book? Can't it be referred to artistically in a manner that does not offend the reader's sensibilities?"

Artist Salah Tahir comments, "This is a sign of psychological illness. A person who is psychologically ill does not become an authority on ideas that have to do with public opinion. There are numerous sentences, expressions and verses in religious books that deal explicitly with sexual relationships.

"There is a huge, famous painting in Italy by Titian that shows a nude female seated at one end of a table and a fully clothed woman seated at the other end of that table. The painting is entitled 'Sacred and Profane Love.' It is the naked woman who symbolizes sacred love while the clothed woman symbolizes profane love. The psychology of clothing maintains that man invented clothing to show off the attractive qualities of the human body.

"Should we burn such a painting? Should we burn statues of nudes and paintings that depict nudes, for example? Should we burn Freud's works? Should we burn the temple at Abu Simbel because it has friezes of nudes? Should we burn the nudists in Africa? The implications of all this are evil. The best thing for those who are making such demands is emotional and physical therapy."

Should We Burn Books of Jurisprudence?

Artist Midhat 'Asim adds, "Literature and art reveal the secrets of the human soul and of human feelings. Like science and religion before them, they probe the depths of those thoughts and feelings without restrictions. If today, as we approach the 21st century, we want to restore the age of ignorance and backwardness and a tendency to look ignorantly toward the past, that wish can only be a dark summer cloud, as I said, that will be dispelled. Perhaps what has been related here about the stance taken by enlightened intellectuals would induce us to devote more attention to our Egyptian and Arab heritage. It might induce us to study and explore everything about our heritage. I do not think that the claim that is being made against 'One Thousand and One Nights' is a serious one because it would mean that that demand would have to be extended to many books of jurisprudence which discuss knowledgeably and in considerable detail sexual and erotic relations such as those that were mentioned in passing in 'One Thousand and One Nights.' There is nothing in religion, in science or in art that is restrictive."

Baba Sharu says, "Sex is an integral part of life, and sexual activity is a fundamental part of stories about people, even those that are related in divine books. Thus, 'One Thousand and One Nights' holds a towering and prominent position among the literary works of the whole world. No one has ever complained about it. It is like any work in our literary heritage, including the literature of the world and classical paintings of nudes."

Ibrahim Shalabi adds, "If we were to look closely at the books of our heritage, those books that are considered to be outstanding, such as 'Al-Aghani' by al-Isfahani and the collected poems of Averrhoes, would we find there anything less than what we can find in 'One Thousand and One Nights?' Can we possibly demand that these books too be burned? If we did, we would forfeit ourselves; we would forfeit our history and our culture which have always sustained us."

Freedom, Bread and Love

Anis Mansur speaks decisively: "If we were to learn that world literature revolves around three issues: freedom, bread and love, and if we were to strip literature of everything that has been written about love, figuratively and literally, then we would be depriving literature of one third of its esthetic value."

Mr Mansur adds, "This reminds me of a case that came up in the United States in the fifties. This case was about the objections voiced by the public censor for artistic works who objected to admitting 'Lady Chatterley's Lover,' a novel by D.H. Lawrence, into the United States. The censor also objected to the novel, 'Lolita,' by the Russian-born American author Nabokov. He also objected to a very old novel called 'Fanny Hill' by John Cleland. The reasons given by the American public censor for his objections were that 'Lady Chatterley's Lover' was a story about the adultery of a woman whose husband is paralyzed. 'Lolita' deals with a 12-year old girl who becomes the object of a 50-year old man's infatuation. 'Fanny Hill' is an account of a migrant girl's life as a prostitute. But the Association of American Publishers decided to defend all

these literary works. So the publishers' attorney took the case to court where he thanked the great censor for his concern about public morals and the morale of young people, children and women in the United States. Then the attorney made one request to the censor. He asked him to remove from every home and every church that book which has been held with the highest regard by everyone for hundreds of years. He asked him to remove The Old Testament because that book contained descriptions of all kinds of sexual deviance between men, between women and between humans and animals. He also said that the book contained stories that encouraged prostitution. No sooner did the attorney say that in his defense, than the judge announced that the ban on the literary works would be lifted."

Ahmad Bahjat replies, "This is not a case of the state interfering with works of art, nor is it a question of the state fighting against the book, 'One Thousand and One Nights.' The true significance of this question has to do with removing 2 pages from a book, that has 1,000 pages. These two pages ought to be removed because they make explicit references to sexual organs. Deleting these lines would cause no harm, but harm would be done if they were left unchanged because leaving them would be against public morals, and that would violate the publications law."

Deleting References to Sexual Organs

The eminent author Mustafa Amin replies, "It is my opinion that 'One Thousand and One Nights' is read by only a few people. It is like medical books which are read by physicians only. If we were to delete from medical books references to sexual organs, everything in them would turn into fiction, and we would consider a scientific discourse morally corrupting. Explicit literature is an inseparable part of literature. The world is changing. If we were to look at all of the world's literature, we would find that literature deals now with problems that could not possibly have been dealt with 50 years ago."

Poet Fathi Sa'id comments, "How can we delete parts of our literary heritage? Can we, for example, delete lines of poetry from the well-known 'mu'allaqah' [ode] by Imru' al-Qays?

"And what do we do with that well-known poem by the genius of poetry who described a nude woman from head to toe? Do we burn that poem? Do we forget about it altogether? Or do we ban it from university classrooms and special studies"?

Ibrahim Shalabi retorts sharply, "Let's ask ourselves about the last edition of that book. I believe that no new editions of that book have been printed for scores of years. How can all the copies in Egypt be collected so that what we want deleted from them can be deleted? And let's assume for the sake of argument that we can collect all these copies--and that is impossible--how can we collect all the copies that can be found from the ocean to the gulf?"

Anis Mansur says, "The first edition of 'One Thousand and One Nights' was printed by the government's printing press in 1881, and the second edition was printed by Jesuit priests in Beirut in 1883. But this book, which has 125 stories that were narrated over a period of 1,001 nights, had been translated

into French 100 years before that. Then it was translated from the French into English by the British Orientalist, Sir Richard Burton, the great grandfather of the well-known actor, Richard Burton. [Imitations of] that book appeared in many European works. In European literature, there is 'The Decameron,' a collection of 20 stories by the Italian author Boccaccio. That book has very explicit accounts and expressions, but no one has ever burned any version of it in any language."

Mustafa Amin replies, "I think that anyone who does not want to read 'One Thousand and One Nights' should not do so. Anyone who does not wish to have his modesty offended should either burn his own individual copy or not read the book."

Ibrahim Shalabi comments, "How many young people now have access to a copy of 'One Thousand and One Nights?' Only those who may have inherited a copy from their fathers and grandfathers do. And even then young people now do not have time to read that book."

"Of course the book was written at a time when there were no movies, theaters or video cassettes. Engaging stories had to be written so that people could forget about the hardship of work and the toil of life. Now there are movies, plays and serials, and these can be found not only in movie theaters and playhouses, but they are available in most homes through television and video cassettes. These works contain more corrupting material than the book, 'One Thousand and One Nights' does. This is because these movies and plays have more influence on young people. They use sound and images, whereas 'One Thousand and One Nights' is a book that one may or may not read."

Spawning Criminal Conduct

Baba Sharu says, "If this is the rationale for attacking our heritage, we will have to burn everything in our literary and artistic heritage. We will have to burn masterpieces of painting and sculpture, especially classical works, because man's and woman's sexual parts are visible in them."

"The question is not where one draws the line. What is baffling is that the book is put on trial when acquiring it and reading it is a matter of discretion. It is for this reason that censorship maintains a firm, stern hard-line approach regarding television and radio because their programs come into all homes and everyone has access to them without any controls. But books, playhouses and movie theaters are subject to a person's discretion. People are free to choose what they want."

"Should we draw the line at those lines in 'One Thousand and One Nights' and let explicit pornographic movies show what corrupts young people's morals and ideas, undermines their values and unleashes their instincts without any controls? People line up to get drugs, and people line up outside those shady theaters that show these pornographic movies. Most of those people who stand in those lines had little education, and they are thus quite impressionable. In most cases that creates the climate for the criminal conduct that takes us by surprise every once in a while and undermines our entire society."

Ahmad Bahjat replies, "The book, 'One Thousand and One Nights' was written over a period of time by more than one author. Evidence for this lies in the fact that the stories combine depictions of different ages. The book has descriptions of some erotic scenes that are artistically and thematically unjustified.

"Literature has its own characteristics, and a literary discourse differs from ordinary modes of discourse. Purging the book from expressions that offend modesty would maintain the book's position in our popular heritage, and that would pose no danger. The book may be circulated after that. There is a difference between a man's description of sex and an artist's rendition of it. An artist has a special view of sex. The old edition of 'One Thousand and One Nights' is like a white dress with a black stain. If we remove the stain from the dress, the dress would still be beautiful and it would not lose anything. Those who are crying over that black stain cannot be serious because no one hates cleanliness."

Al-Ghazali and Freud

Salah Tahir says in utter bewilderment, "Since his creation man's existence has been based on sex. What does it mean to delete sex from 'One Thousand and One Nights?' Should this be man's position toward his heritage? Mankind's honor lies in his heritage. What should mankind do then with explicit plays that are performed in London and Paris, for example? Imam al-Ghazali says, 'The human race is driven by four appetites: the appetite for food, the appetite for sex, the appetite for power and the appetite for money. What is important in my opinion is the ability to transcend these four appetites which we all have and which cannot be denied. Life cannot go on without them. Instead of denying them, one should rather refine, improve and educate oneself by using cultural, moral and social checks and balances.

"In the 19th century Freud revealed his theory which attributed all human endeavors to sex. Then Freud modified his theory with one splendid sentence. 'When man is educated, he becomes spiritually, mentally and physically refined, ennobled and transcendent.' That means that he turns his sex drive into creative activities which assume various forms of expression. A man so transcendent may even become a mystic.

"When we consider this matter from a statistical viewpoint, we find that there is no moderation among geniuses. They always carry things too far. Therefore, a genius either transcends himself by deprivation or he indulges himself in carnal pleasures. Every genius has a message for mankind: it may be scientific, artistic, intellectual, social or economic. Every genius has to create a unique and hitherto unprecedented work. Geniuses usually go to extremes in all cases. If we apply this principle to 'One Thousand and One Nights' and we say that it is the work of geniuses, then we will conclude that it must not be evaluated by ordinary people; it should only be evaluated by geniuses like those who created it."

The Most Dangerous Kinds of Ignorance

Mustafa 'Abd-al-Ghani says, "In my book, 'Shahrizad fi al-Fikr al-'Arabi al-Hadith' [Scheherezade in Modern Arabic Thought] I affirmed that in drawing

their inspiration from 'One Thousand and One Nights,' our intellectuals were not able to reconcile themselves to... [words missing]. And here are our new judges affirming that they too have not read 'One Thousand and One Nights.' It is unfortunate that in our modern age our introduction to 'One Thousand and One Nights' comes through the French author, (Galain) and the [illegible words] in Europe. And now that we cannot discover the true face of Scheherezade, we've gone back once again to making things difficult to understand, except that this time it is not the unusual that is becoming difficult to understand. We are the ones who are becoming difficult to understand because we do not know ourselves, and that is the most dangerous kind of ignorance."

Mustafa adds, "Quite briefly, I am asking official agencies to keep their hands off 'One Thousand and One Nights.' I am asking intellectuals to devote attention to the establishment of a scientific committee that would evaluate our Arab heritage. This committee must be formed by an official decree issued by official agencies. It is shameful that intellectuals have nothing to say in this matter while judges, who once ruled in favor of 'Ali 'Abd-al-Raziq and Taha Husayn, are taking a stance against free thought. It was half a century ago that a book entitled, 'Limadha Ana Mulhid' [Why I Am an Atheist] was published. No one demanded that this book be confiscated or burned. But today there are those who are demanding that 'One Thousand and One Nights,' one of the most important books in our Arab heritage, be confiscated and burned."

Artist Midhat 'Asim replies, "This is a dangerous demand. I hold officials responsible for not confronting it squarely, decisively and sternly. We allow problems to grow and become exacerbated. Then we begin to deal with them. This happens in many areas, chiefly in economics and liberalization. It recently happened in the economic decrees."

Finally, Ahmad Bahjat says, "Dar al-Hilal printed a special edition of 'One Thousand and One Nights.' It is an urbane and expurgated edition. It is the best of all editions, because it is clean as far as the printing is concerned and because what amounts to no more than 2 pages of the book's 1,000 pages have been deleted. These are the pages that contain the lines which have the explicit sexual references. This urbane edition of the book does not diminish the book's value as one of the books of our popular heritage."

The Original Version

But Anis Mansur responded to that by saying, "The original editions of 'One Thousand and One Nights' are not in circulation. These are the editions that have objectionable and offensive expressions. At the same time there are edited editions and there are also editions for children. Anyone who wants to read 'One Thousand and One Nights' is free to choose the edition he would like to read, and he may do so without imposing his own opinion and his own preferences on literary history and historic honesty."

Tharwat Abazah concludes the discussion by saying, "To summarize: we will not have our heritage fought or distorted. I fear that such distortion is being prompted by the Arabs' enemies, by the enemies of Islam and the enemies of our literary heritage. Once they've found their way to 'One Thousand and One Nights,' I fear they will also find their way to other books of our heritage. If

the prosecution confiscates the original edition of 'One Thousand and One Nights,' it would be doing something that is perplexing and bewildering. That book has been in existence for hundreds of years, and public prosecutors should have confiscated it then. It would be truly extraordinary if this landmark of our heritage is confiscated while total corruption in modern Egyptian movies is left alone. It is these movies that deserve to be fought and banned. They do not have the sanctity of our heritage, especially since they are movies that distort the image of Egypt and violate its integrity, its reputation and its economy."

Once again it was Anis Mansur who settled the question once and for all. "The book, 'One Thousand and One Nights' is not considered fine literature. Its language, both the prose and the poetry, is poor. However, the book is a work of folklore that has its place in the hearts and minds of all ancient civilizations. All the objectionable expressions that may be found in that book are also found in all old poetry. All we have to do to find many of these expressions is skim the pages of 'Al-Aghani' by al-Isfahani. Historical honesty requires us to preserve our heritage intact, be it verse, prose, paintings or sculpture. All of that can be found in contemporary world literature.

"Let's consider, for example, what the Vatican does about explicit literary works or those that contradict the precepts of the Christian Catholic faith. The most that the Vatican does is publish a black list of these works in its official magazines, called OSSERVATORE ROMANO. The vatican publishes a list of those books that it thinks are incompatible with morals and religion, and it asks believers not to read them. But the Vatican never demands that these books be destroyed or burned!"

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EGYPT

LEGAL SCHOLAR DISCUSSES APPLICATION OF ISLAMIC LAW

Cairo UKTUBAR in Arabic 5 May 85 pp 16-17

[Article by Justice Muhammad Sa'id al-'Ashmawi: "The Foundations of Egyptian Law Are Neither Alien to Society nor Incompatible with the Canonical Law of Islam"]

[Text] Among the reasons that are being cited by advocates of codifying the canonical law of Islam--which is actually a drive to codify Islamic jurisprudence--is that this process--which is a process of codifying Islamic jurisprudence--would restore the Egyptian, Arab and Islamic heritage to our legal system and enable us to derive our laws from national sources instead of following French law. French law, from which Egyptian law was copied, is alien to us. Furthermore, Egyptian law does not include a penal code, and it also contains violations of Islamic canonical law and Islamic jurisprudence.

To explain the purpose of considering these reasons, it would be a good idea to discuss all of them, one at a time.

Egyptian law is derived from French law, and French law is derived from Roman law. What is the truth about this law? To what extent does it agree with or differ from the canonical law of Islam and Islamic jurisprudence?

The city of Rome ruled the Old World in Europe, West Asia and North Africa from the second century B.C. to the sixth century A.D. The safety of the Roman Empire was based on two principles: the sword, with which the empire broadened what was called the Pax Romana; and the law, by which justice was established.

The Roman Empire had two legal systems: the law of the city of Rome--this was the law of the city or the civil law--and a law for the rest of the people in Italy and elsewhere in the empire. That law was the law of the people. Each one of the two legal systems borrowed from the other since customs, traditions and conventions were similar. Eventually the two systems were merged into one which became known as the Roman Law.

In 527 A.D. the Eastern Roman Empire, whose capital was Byzantium, was ruled by Emperor Justinian who devoted special attention to the law. In 533 A.D. he compiled the laws in what came to be known as Justinian's Corpus Juris Civilis. He also compiled what came to be known as an encyclopedia of law.

Justinian's Code of Civil Law comprises all the principles upon which the legal

systems of the world--the Latin and the Anglo-Saxon--are based. It also shares many similarities with the foundations of Islamic jurisprudence. This is attributable to the fact that the faculty of reason in man is similar. People's actions and customs are also similar. Anyone who discovers the foundations or principles of action discovers the principle that governs the human mind and all human actions.

Also, the authors of Roman law had codified all the conventions, customs and traditions of the Old World. They had laid down the foundations of the legal system and coined most of its expressions and terminology. This is attributable to the fact that the old Egyptian system, which antedates the Roman Empire, was not based on law. It was rather based on conscience, which was referred to by the word, "Ma'it" (Truth, Justice and Righteousness). That system linked an individual's conscience with the universal conscience so that man can be fashioned and society established on principles that are completely different from those that became the principles of the world system, after the rule of law rather than that of conscience was expanded and the Roman method of law became widespread.

Roman law--after the two legal systems were merged--comprised all the customs, conventions and habits that were known in Italy, Gaul (France), Greece, Turkey, Syria (Syria and all its territories), the north Arabian Peninsula, Egypt and North Africa.

Roman law recognized procedures for taking public action, instituting probate and taking action to impose guardians on minors. It recognized public civil servants and a public treasury, and it restricted inheritance to blood relatives who are related to each other through male members of a family. Roman law prohibited marriage to one's sisters, one's nieces and their grandchildren as well as to one's maternal and paternal aunts. It defined the difference between public property and private property as well as the difference between sacred, religious and holy objects. It also recognized the system of trusts and that of exclusive ownership. Roman law recognized grave offenses, for which the penalty was decapitation, fire or water deprivation, exile or hard labor in the mines. Other penalties were imposed for lesser crimes. Some of these penalties were imposed to settle an offense for which an indemnity that would be acceptable to the victim was not paid voluntarily. The indemnity paid by a slave was half that paid by a free man.

There are many similarities between Roman jurisprudence and Islamic jurisprudence, among which are those precepts which are mentioned in Justinian's Code of Civil Law. There is no harm and no adversity. The law of custom is a firm law. The burden of proof lies on a plaintiff, not on the one who denies a complaint. What is common kindness is conditional. It is the intent and spirit of a contract that one is to follow, not the words themselves. In criminal matters one's interpretation of the law must lean toward mercy. It is better to use contracts than to ignore them. A firm will comes with resolve. A struggle that is undertaken to relieve pain is better than one undertaken to obtain gain. Misuse of property does not serve the interests of the public. People are equal in the eyes of the law. Proper intuition dictates that he who assumes primary responsibility for unclaimed property acquires a right to that property. The only money that belongs to man is that which is left him after he pays his

debts. Contracts are to be interpreted in favor of debtors. Fraud does not embrace the fraudulent. It is the law of nature that people are born free. And there are other such precepts.

The similarity between the principles of Roman law and the principles of all legal systems is due to the fact that these principles are all the same. They are similar because human nature is one and the same and because social relationships are similar. If one civilization, culture or community was able to discover, recognize and define these principles first, it established them in human thought and everyone followed them. No one can ignore these principles because they are a true manifestation of human nature and social relations. The art of legislation had reached an advanced stage among the Romans who were able to coin terms and expressions and formulate unequivocal and explicit laws about social ties and relationships. All this became part of mankind's heritage that can neither be ignored nor turned away from. Under current conditions it is not easy to find an alternative to that system.

The similarity between Roman jurisprudence and Islamic jurisprudence is due to the fact that Islamic jurisprudence was founded first in Damascus, the capital of the Umayyad Caliphate, which was the closest place in the Umayyad state to Byzantium where Justinian's code was issued. Furthermore, Roman law was applied in Syria itself before Islam. Thus, the similarity between Roman jurisprudence and Islamic jurisprudence may be due to the fact that Muslim theologians directly or indirectly studied and understood the Roman legal system and the principles of its jurisprudence, those that were prevalent in Syria and in the countries of the Middle East in general. The similarity may also be the result of human communities, whose customs and conditions are similar, arriving at [the same] opinions, ideas and expressions without taking notice of that fact. That similarity may also be due to the fact that Muslim theologians arrived at the same principles as a result of having lived under the same conditions and circumstances that the theologians of Rome lived under. They may have had a spiritual and mental affinity with those theologians and may have shared with them aspects of their conduct and behavior.

Some people refuse to compare Islamic jurisprudence, the subjects of Islamic history or Islamic provisions with others that arose in other environments or under other conditions. Those people also like to deny that there is any similarity between such systems, and they refuse to accept any evidence of that. They think that by refusing and denying the existence of such similarities they are placing Islam on a higher plane and preserving its supremacy and purity. Actually such conduct is nothing but naive. It hurts Islam; it contradicts its provisions; and it clashes with its spirit. In addition, it is refuted by scientific fact and authoritative historical evidence.

One of the reasons for the true greatness of Islam is that it encompasses the movement of history and sets forth the proper chronology that embraces the entire past. It administers the present knowledgeably, and it anticipates the future. Islam is the legacy of all religions from the earliest days till Muhammad brought forth his message. Islam denies no earlier summons to the cause of God; it does not turn away from a message; and it is unswerving in its quest for reform. A religious legacy means the legacy of every civilization, every

culture and any knowledge. Religion is the formula that gave rise to civilization; it is religion that gave rise to culture and achieved learning.

The Koran says, "Say: 'We believe in Allah and that which is revealed to us; we believe in what was revealed to Abraham, Ishamel, Isaac, Jacob, and the tribes; to Moses and Jesus and the other prophets. We make no distinction between any of them, and to Allah we have surrendered ourselves'" [al-Baqarah: 136]. The Koran also says, "He has ordained for men the faith He has revealed to you and formerly enjoined on Noah and Abraham, on Moses and Jesus, saying: 'Observe this Faith and be united in it'" [al-Shura: 13]. Thus, the Koran wants Muslims to understand that Muhammad's message was one in a series of divine messages. The Koran wants Muslims to understand that Islam is the legacy of all messages, religions, learning, cultures and civilizations. This means that it is essential that one look into all religions, absorb their essence and act accordingly in the interests of mankind and for the sake of God.

In fact, when the Koran says, "Of some apostles We have already told you...; but there are others of whom We have not yet spoken" [al-Nisa': 164], the Koran is calling upon Muslims to sanction the messages that are known to them or that are mentioned in the Koran and move beyond them to others borne by messengers who were not mentioned in the Koran. The clearest evidence of that lies in that noble historic sense which devotes attention to everything in the past, looks forward to the broadest prospects in the future and calls upon man to act knowledgeably in the present with an awareness of the past and an eye on the future.

Denying the [influence of] past civilizations, cultures, sciences and the arts on Islam is incompatible with the spirit of Islam which advocates that knowledge must be sought, even in China. Islam advocates passing on the legacy of civilizations, cultures, the sciences and the arts. On the other hand those who deny those attributes to Islam expose themselves to ridicule because these attributes are established and confirmed by historical facts and scientific evidence. Those who deny [the universality of Islam] are denying an actual fact and a peremptory truth. They are thereby isolating themselves from history, reducing their minds to a static condition, and separating themselves from everything. They do not interact with the real components of progress; they do not exercise good influence on events; and they make no significant contribution to the history of science, culture and civilization.

Muslims understood the spirit of Islam until the fourth century of the Hijrah calendar, and they were aware of the movement of history. They also understood their true role in history, so they did not deny the fact that other nations in countries they conquered and elsewhere knew what they did not know. They did not deny the fact that other people may have developed systems and acquired knowledge that they had not yet acquired. Thus, Muslims adopted from others management and state administrative systems, and they found nothing wrong with that. The word, "diwan," is the Arabized version of the Persian word, "iwan," and the word, "barid," is also a Persian word, and so on. Islamic philosophy also began as an effort to explain Greek philosophy. Then Islamic philosophy produced works in its own right. The Islamic mind followed Aristotle's logic for some time until it came up with its own experimental method that was later taken to Europe where it brought about the Renaissance there.

These notions are truly understood when one understands the nature of the similarity between Roman jurisprudence and Islamic jurisprudence. Most of the legal terms and systems upon which all other legal systems are based were defined by Roman law.

It is worth noting that this understanding of the similarity between Roman and Islamic jurisprudence does not conflict with the essence of religion. Both religion and canonical law are interested in man, not in rules. Their concern about conscience is greater than their interest in legal principles. This is due to the fact that real reform is based on one's conscience and is advanced by man. If one's conscience is true and man is reformed, then laws would be based on sound principles, and they would be properly applied.

One may conclude that Roman law is not alien to Islamic laws, and Roman jurisprudence is not incompatible with Islamic jurisprudence.

When Napoleon Bonaparte asked French legislators to draft a civil law, which is the law that governs human relations, legislators referred to Justinian's Code, which contains all of jurisprudence and all the statutes and legal expressions. They used Justinian's Code to draft the Napoleonic Code to which they added new provisions that had been introduced into the legal system since the days of Justinian. French legislators did the same thing with other codes of law, including the penal code.

In 1883 when Egyptian legislators wanted to modernize the court system and legal procedures, they noticed that Islamic jurisprudence had not been systematized or classified. Accordingly, there was no code of Islamic jurisprudence. Egyptian legislators also noticed that Islamic jurisprudence did not dwell on procedural matters in front of the courts. It did not establish a hierarchy of the court system, nor did it establish procedures for appeals or for formulating statements to explain a court's decisions. Egyptian legislators also found other matters were missing in Islamic jurisprudence. So they translated the French codes of law into Arabic and made simple amendments to these codes which became the Egyptian law. These codes of law were actually similar to Egyptian traditions, conventions and customs, and they were compatible with the principles of the canonical law of Islam for the aforementioned reasons.

The current civil law was enacted in 1949. It is a more precise formulation of the previous principles to which new court rulings or new opinions by exegesists have been appended. The penal code, however, was re-enacted in 1937. It was amended several times to make it keep up with social change and enable it to deal with every evil action committed by society and people.

Egyptian law is neither French nor Roman; it does not comprise principles that are alien to Egyptian society or incompatible with Islamic law. If it did, applying it for more than a century in a manner that established the principles of justice and consolidated the pillars of security would have been impossible. What happened was that Egyptian legislators made use of the organization, classification, form and legal format of French laws, just as we are now making use of the products of western technology, and just as we are making use of airplanes, telephones, the wireless and everything that is produced by western civilization.

The legal framework that has been used in Egypt--it was borrowed from France and from Roman law--is merely the form and formulation of legal principles that existed in Egypt. These principles are comprised in Islamic jurisprudence. They were not alien to Egyptian society, [and if they were not part of the legal system], they should have been established to keep up with social change, cultural progress and changes in methods of human relations. There is nothing in that framework or in those principles that is incompatible with the canonical law of Islam or contradicts the spirit of society. If there were, society would have rejected it, and it would have never become part of the legal system.

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EGYPT

PROPER RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGION, POLITICS DISCUSSED

Provocative Opinions Expressed

Cairo ROSE AL-YUSUF in Arabic 6 May 85 pp 26-28

[Interview with Dr Faraj Fudah by Jamal-al-Din Husayn; date and place not specified]

[Text] "Using the authority of the Koran regarding the peace treaty paved the way for discord."

"Politics must be kept out of religion to preserve religion and politics."

"The danger here lies in considering a party that disagrees with religion to be associated with 'the devil's party'."

Let's set forth one opinion against another and argue one point with another. "Let's debate them in a courteous manner." That is what is required in dealing with the opinions and ideas that Dr Faraj Fudah is proposing in this interview. To many, these opinions seem provocative.

Dr Faraj Fudah thinks there is a big difference between Islam, the religion, and Islam, the state. The fact that an Islamic state does not exist does not mean that the religion does not. He demands that religion be separated from politics and matters of government, and he opposes the application of the canonical law of Islam in Egypt at the present time. His opposition is based on his contention that the application of Islamic law would set up a religious government in power and that would eventually lead to sectarian strife.

We debated these opinions and ideas quite freely. We disagreed or agreed with them, but we did that without charging each other with infidelity. The text of the interview with Dr Faraj Fudah follows:

[Question] Is it possible for the Islamic movement to become a political movement?

[Answer] I believe there is an Islamic religion, and I believe there is politics. I believe that the pitfalls of politics and its labyrinthine ways must be kept out of Islam to preserve both religion and politics.

[Question] What does that mean?

[Answer] That means that we can disagree politically and that we can, despite that disagreement and with or without good will, accept the other opinion's victory without losing hope that one day the majority will see things our way.

This is what would happen when political activity and religion do not overlap each other. But if our disagreements are based on religion, each one of us will consider his opinion more than just an opinion. He will consider it an authentic approach that is necessarily backed by religion. Then any one of us can easily spend his life and lose it defending what he thinks--rightly or wrongly--is a principle of the faith. Herein lies the danger. I can cite you scores of examples of that.

[Question] Please do.

[Answer] The attitude toward the peace treaty. The attitudes of al-Shaykh 'Umar al-Talmasani and al-Shaykh Salah Abu Isma'il have been established in statements they made and in the book, "Al-Shahadah" by al-Shaykh Salah. Both men think that al-Sadat departed from Islam by signing the treaty. Al-Shaykh Salah adds that a legitimate government, if called upon to repent and then insist upon its opinion, clearly becomes apostate, and the government will become that of a sinful tyrant before he is called upon to repent. To back up his contention al-Shaykh Salah cites authoritative texts from the Koran and the Prophetic Tradition.

On the other side of the coin five important scholars from al-Azhar, including the shaykh of al-Azhar and the Mufti, announced their opinion of the treaty. That opinion may be summarized by saying that al-Sadat fought when there was no other course for him but that of war, and he made peace when he found that peace was imperative. That was precisely what the formal legal opinion stated. By establishing peace, al-Sadat restored Muslim territory and Muslim people to Muslim countries. Thus, he did his duty as a Muslim ruler. The five scholars found authoritative evidence in the Koran and the Prophetic Tradition to back up their opinion. It is my opinion that we are fortunate to be living under the rule of positive laws that allow us to listen to the opinions of two sides of an issue.

However, two facts are certain here. First, basing the case on the Koran and the Prophetic Tradition did not provide an incentive for agreement; it rather paved the way to discord. Accordingly, the question that is being asked now about why should we be afraid to turn to the Koran and the Prophetic Tradition can be answered by citing this example.

The second fact is this: if either al-Shaykh Salah Abu Isma'il and the Muslim Brothers, on the one hand, and the men of al-Azhar, on the other, were in power, either one would have adopted his opinion and considered it God's judgment on the matter. He would have considered the other party's opinion to constitute a departure from what is proper in religion, and he would have considered proponents of that opinion members of the so-called "devil's party." It is this that is dangerous.

That would be the new state of affairs. There would be other matters that would be easier to deal with. There is, for example, the ongoing dispute over the Personal Status Law. Authors of that law think that its principles lie in the Hanafi and Malki schools of jurisprudence. Those who are critical of the law say that it departs from the principles of religion. One of those critics, cited by al-Shaykh Salah Abu Isma'il in his testimony at the al-Jihad trial, described the law as a document that allows a woman to have two husbands at the same time.

The Dangers of Rule by Divine Right

[Question] What in your opinion are the other dangers of politicizing Islam?

[Answer] The answer to the first question may have addressed part of those fears, but let me talk further about what is more important and more dangerous. Let's begin with what I will call here, the principle of ruling by divine right. The origin of that principle can be found in the well-known position taken by al-Khalifah 'Uthman ibn 'Affan when his aides asked him to choose between three alternatives: he could be made to pay for his mistakes; he could be killed; or he could remove himself from office. Regarding the latter the ruler replied, "By God I will not take away what God has bestowed upon me!"

In that statement 'Uthman ibn 'Affan was affirming that he did not come to power because people had chosen him as their ruler. He came to power by God's will, and only God can remove him from power by ending his life. Conflict in the history of Islamic political thought began then. It was a conflict between two theories, the first of which prevailed. That theory was the theory of rule by divine right. The second theory, the theory that a ruler be chosen by the people, was adopted by small groups of rebels at different times in the history of Islam. According to the first theory, a ruler is accountable only to God, but according to the second theory, he is accountable to his subjects.

It is unfortunate that in the course of 1,300 years of Islamic government the former theory's supremacy was absolute. It is extremely unfortunate that proponents of Islamic political thought have not yet proposed a clear alternative to that theory.

Let me make another point. The Islamic political movement does not yet have a clearly defined political program. It is not enough for the Muslim Brothers to proclaim, "The Koran is our constitution and the messenger of God is our leader. We seek God and we hope to die for His cause." That is not enough. These words are nothing more than chants or wishful thinking. The Muslim Brothers must give us Islam's view of serious issues such as that of choosing the ruler. Is the ruler chosen by the consensus of a majority of Muslims as was the case when Abu Bakr was chosen at the meeting in al-Saqifah? Is he appointed to that position by the writ of a previous ruler, as was the case with 'Umar? Is he selected from and by a group of senior statesmen, as was the case with 'Uthman? Do his supporters acknowledge him as their sovereign, as was the case with 'Ali? Does he use the power of the sword to become ruler, as did Mu'awiyah? Does he inherit the position, as was the case with Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah? Should the manner in which a ruler is chosen be left to the spirit of the age? Shouldn't we acknowledge that Islam does not comprise a political theory that explains how a ruler is to be chosen?

There is also another question: the question of consultation. Most people, including al-Shaykh al-Sha'rawi, think that it is not binding; but a few people, including Khalid Muhammad Khalid, think it is. If it is non-binding, what is its use? If it is, in what context would it be binding? Does the fact that it is binding mean that a neighboring Islamic regime could depart from the rules of proper religion to adopt the non-binding rule of consultation, as is the case in Saudi Arabia?

There are numerous questions.

Now we come to the gravest point that many people avoid talking about. The statement, "The Koran is our constitution," is a statement addressed to Muslims only, and only Muslims can accept it. It raises this question: Is the constitution that is being proposed by the political Islamic tendency directed to 90 percent of the Egyptian people or to all the people?

My own personal opinion is that this question is not a question of the majority versus the minority. The constitution is an issue over which public agreement is a must. If there is no agreement, the constitution loses the justification for its existence.

[Question] But Islam is a religion and a state; a creed and a system; a holy book and a sword, [isn't it]?

[Answer] First, let me answer each section of your question separately. I do concur that Islam is a religion. But the business about Islam being a state is something that has to be looked into. This is a statement with a hidden meaning; there is a hidden objective behind that statement.

I do concur that Islam is a holy book which has a place in our hearts. But the statement that Islam is a sword is one that I ask history about. Nothing is more telling than history. Muslim swords cut off more Muslim heads than they did non-believers' heads!

[Question] Forgive me! What I meant by the sword here is fighting for the cause of God, and that is an obligation.

[Answer] Let me answer that question, my friend, with a question. Wasn't it the supporters of Imam 'Ali and the supporters of 'A'ishah, Talhah and al-Zubayr who fought each other in the battle of al-Jamal until the number of the dead on both sides rose to 10,000? Wasn't a cry raised on both sides for the fighters to cut off each other's limbs? Did anyone of these fighters on either side doubt that he was fighting for the cause of God?

[Question] Forgive me, Dr Faraj, but that was a political conflict. In other words, Muslims were fighting each other in a way that was not much different from what is going on today between Iraq and Iran.

[Answer] Let me comment on this here by making two points.

First, I agree with you that it was a political conflict, and that confirms my contention that the earliest Muslims separated politics and religion less than

25 years after the death of the prophet. The conflict here was completely political; it was basically a struggle for power.

Second, that conflict was different from the conflict between Iraq and Iran. The two parties in the conflict that took place in the battle of al-Jamal were people who were most knowledgeable about the Koran. Furthermore, they were the ones who became the source of the Prophetic Tradition itself. But the present conflict is one that is basically between political powers; it is taking place in a political context under special circumstances. Although it may be said that Iran's claim is a religious one, Iraq's claim is not.

Separating Religion from Politics

[Question] Then do you think it is necessary to separate religion from the state?

[Answer] This has to be clarified. What I mean is this: religion and politics are to be separated. The presence of religion in the state is acceptable because religion is the foundation upon which conscience is formed. I am delighted that religion is being taught in the schools. I am pleased that there are religious programs and that clergymen are honored and respected. All that is acceptable and may be expanded. But religion in government is a different story.

[Question] Do you support the notion of applying the canonical laws of Islam?

[Answer] Under present conditions, certainly not! That may shock some people; many people may subscribe to that opinion, but are reluctant to say so. I, however, do have the courage to say so because I think that the canonical law of Islam can only be applied in an Islamic society. At the present time we do not have an Islamic society. That is one thing. Another thing is that applying the canonical law of Islam now will pave the way for a religious state, and that will pave the way for government that will rule by divine right. That will directly or indirectly bring clergymen into government, and all that will lead to sectarian strife.

[Question] How can applying the canonical law of Islam bring about a religious state?

[Answer] Let's take the example of applying the punishment for adultery. As soon as that goes into effect, people will start exclaiming, "How can the punishment for adultery be applied when we have belly dancing, when folk dancing is allowed, when wanton songs are widespread, female television announcers are not fully and properly clothed, and actors and actresses exchange kisses in movies? How can the punishment for adultery be applied when acting and dancing schools encourage people to commit abominable acts and when colleges of art highlight the beautiful features of the human body? How can we do that when male announcers too have become depraved, not growing their beards and not trimming their moustaches? And so on. We can start with the punishment for adultery as an example and end up closing down schools for acting and the arts. We would ban female announcers and ban this and that. One may extrapolate from that example and say that no one will be able to put a stop to all that because such correlations would be logical, and they would happen very quickly.

Dr Fudah's Opinions Refuted

Cairo ROSE AL-YUSUF in Arabic 6 May 85 pp 28-29

[Interview with Muhammad 'Abd-al-Shafi, member of the Consultative Council and vice president of the Liberal Party; date and place not specified]

[Text] "I would advise you to give up on non-religious tendencies."

"Parties are vying with each other regarding the application of the canonical law of Islam."

"There is no priesthood in the history of Islam."

"I challenge you to run for office; no one will vote for you!"

Are there two opinions in Islam about the peace with Israel?

If the provisions of the canonical law of Islam were applied now, immediately, would that lead to the establishment of a religious government and would it cause sectarian strife?

If the provisions of the canonical law of Islam were applied, would that increase religious extremism, or would it do away with that phenomenon?

Many questions are being raised about the opinions and ideas of Dr Faraj Fudah.

Muhammad 'Abd-al-Shafi, member of the Consultative Council and vice president of the Liberal Party answers these questions. At the same time he responds to Dr Faraj Fudah.

At first, Muhammad 'Abd-al-Shafi, member of the Consultative Council and vice president of the Liberal Party commented on Dr Faraj Fudah's opinions and ideas.

He said, "The obvious error that Dr Faraj Fudah relied on was his statement that there were two Islamic tendencies that had different views about the peace issue and al-Sadat's position. He cited the position of the shaykh of al-Azhar and the positions of 'Umar al-Talmasani and Salah Abu Isma'il.

"What concerns me in responding to Dr Fudah is the position of the shaykh of al-Azhar. Both he and the Mufti issued a formal legal opinion in favor of the peace treaty. I am not inclined to accept the opinion of a state employee in this matter. With all due respect to His Eminence, the Shaykh of al-Azhar, he is controlled by new rules and laws that are imposed on him. Therefore, the public would not believe that his opinions and the Mufti's opinions would be neutral under those circumstances. The matter would be different if the shaykh of al-Azhar and the Mufti were elected.

[Question] Mr Muhammad 'Abd-al-Shafi, do you think that applying the canonical law of Islam would lead to the establishment of a regime in which the reins of power in the state would be held by clergymen?

[Answer] There is no priesthood in the history of Islam. But before the canonical law of Islam is applied for the sake of God, the climate must be prepared, and public opinion must be prepared for the application of Islamic law and its provisions.

[Question] How would that be done?

[Answer] This means that the people themselves would try hard to abide by Islamic law and respect its provisions. That can be done by means of a real public referendum that would create an opportunity for every opinion and every idea to be expressed. Before the referendum every group would have an opportunity to express its opinion in the media on applying the canonical law of Islam.

[Question] There are two points that have to do with applying the canonical law of Islam. First, there is an issue that takes precedence over applying Islamic law. It has to do with providing every citizen in society with sufficient shelter, clothing, employment opportunities and private means of transportation. After that we could try setting up punishments. The second point is that all politicians, particularly party members, are being accused of vying with each other regarding the application of Islamic law so as to gain the support of public opinion.

What do you have to say about that?

[Answer] As far as the first point is concerned, let me say that all the positive laws failed to provide the principle of equity and justice for people in all aspects of life. The housing shortage is becoming more acute every day, and there is no hope for relief. At the same time we find there are hundreds of thousands of locked apartments and partially completed buildings that are left deliberately in that condition while people are unable to find housing or are living in the streets or in graveyards.

As far as food is concerned, food prices rose under positive laws and the various economic efforts that we borrowed one time from the East and another time from the West. None of these laws succeeded in bringing about a solution. Instead, prices have continued to rise and curbing them is hopeless.

The solution then lies in the method that al-Khalifah 'Umar ibn 'Abd-al-'Aziz followed when he came to power for a period of 26 months only. When that term expired, there was no one in the Islamic nation who was poor and needy and who deserved any assistance from the state. What happened in those 26 months was that the ruler applied the provisions of Islamic law properly. The condition of the Islamic nation under his administration was exactly like the condition we are in now.

The second point that Dr Faraj Fudah made about party members vying with each other regarding the subject of applying the provisions of Islamic law so as to gain the public's support is one that I do not disagree with. I agree with him completely on that point.

[Question] Do you then approve of the application of Islamic laws without

delay? Do you approve of having all economic laws and activities reviewed in the light of the provisions of Islamic law?

[Answer] Yes, I approve of that completely even though when Islamic law is applied, we will not be in these prominent positions that we have now. But I would prefer to be an ordinary member of a strong society where justice and affection prevail than to be a prominent political leader in a weak society that lives on foreign aid.

[Question] Some people think that applying the provisions of Islamic law immediately would pave the way for the establishment of a religious state that would be directly or indirectly ruled by clergymen. They think that that would lead to sectarian strife. Do you agree with those fears?

[Answer] First of all, using sectarian strife as an excuse to delay the application of the provisions of Islamic law can be refuted. No non-Muslim citizen would be hurt when the provisions of the tolerant canonical law of Islam are applied. Islam preserves all houses of worship: churches and temples. Accordingly, it would safeguard every citizen's opportunities to earn a living, and it would safeguard all the rights of Egyptians.

[Question] But extremism is always to be feared when the provisions of Islamic law are applied and when extrapolations are made to the application of those provisions.

[Answer] If we applied the canonical law of Islam properly, following the Koran and the Tradition of the Prophet, moderation not extremism would be the outcome. Extremism is the product of the improper application of the canonical laws of Islam.

[Question] What is your overall comment then on the sum total of Dr Faraj Fudah's opinions?

[Answer] I can say that Dr Faraj Fudah and I have been friends, but I did not find out about those tendencies that he has until 2 years ago.

[Question] What tendencies?

[Answer] Non-religious tendencies. I would advise him to give up on these new tendencies because they conflict with heaven and earth. I challenge him to run for office on the basis of these principles. No one in the street where he lives would vote for him: not a Muslim, Christian or Jew.

Religion, Politics Deemed Incompatible

Cairo ROSE AL-YUSUF in Arabic 6 May 85 pp 30-32

[Interview with al-Shaykh 'Abd-al-Latif Hamzah, the Mufti of Egypt by Sana' Qabil; date and place not specified]

[Text] The Personal Status Law did not copy the more acceptable opinion of the Hanafi school.

Using the police to enforce a ruling that a wife obey her husband in their dwelling is non-Islamic.

"The court has decided to turn over the defendant's case to His Eminence, the Mufti."

As soon as these words are spoken by the judge, screams and cries are heard in the courtroom, as the defendant holds on to his neck and collapses.

There is no escape. The decision means that the defendant would be hanged!

That was the picture that I had in my mind when I went to see His Eminence the Mufti of Egypt. I was looking for a satisfactory answer.

[Question] What does Your Eminence think about the fact that your name is associated with confirming death sentences?

[Answer] People do not know what the Mufti does. Of course the Mufti's duties are not restricted to confirming death sentences. That is something that the Mufti has been doing only recently.

[Question] Can't a death sentence be carried out without taking the Mufti's opinion?

[Answer] Article 381 of the Code of Criminal Procedures stipulates that a criminal court may not issue a death sentence unless that sentence represents the unanimous decision of the members of the court. That is before the Mufti is consulted. If the Mufti's opinion is not reported to the court 10 days after the documents of the case are sent to him, the court can pronounce its sentence. If the Mufti's position is vacant or if the Mufti is absent, the minister of justice or someone in a comparable position would act in place of the Mufti. Ultimately, the Mufti's opinion is non-binding on the court.

[Question] Does the Mufti have to be knowledgeable about legal provisions and amendments to the law?

[Answer] The Mufti is basically a legal man who is appointed to that position at the rank of a court justice. He reads everything about the case, from A to Z, to find out the proof upon which the court based its verdict and to determine its legality. If he finds the evidence convincing, he approves the death sentence.

I objected to the sentence a few times. I did that in two cases, and the court accepted my opinion. The first case was a murder that was committed by two people. Forensic medicine did not determine absolutely which one of the two actually did the killing. So I commuted the death sentence to life in prison at hard labor.

[Question] But these two people did kill their victim together. Is a prison term enough punishment for them?

[Answer] Yes it is, because we are not absolutely certain who dealt the fatal blow.

The other case had to do with a father who killed his four children. The court turned the case over to the Mufti, but the Mufti, relying on the authority of the Prophetic Tradition which states that "there can be no retaliation against a father for the death of his children," refused [to confirm the death sentence].

[Question] Is this a license for fathers to murder their children?

[Answer] It is not possible for a father to kill his child unless he is in an abnormal state. Scholars explained that statement by saying that a father is the reason for the child's existence; thus, a child cannot become the reason for which a father is executed. And the court did in fact accept the Mufti's opinion.

[Question] Why did you not confirm the death sentence for the rapist in the Alexandria case? You argued in that case that there were no witnesses. Are women raped in the presence of witnesses?

[Answer] I would not discuss the Alexandria case after the court's sentence has been issued. Generally speaking, I viewed that case as a case of adultery not rape because the documents indicate that the crime was not committed against the woman's will. In viewing the case this way I accepted the opinion of a multitude of scholars who maintained that if a defendant recants his confession, his recantation is to be accepted. The court accepted an opinion attributed to Imam al-Shafi'i.

[Question] Does this mean that if a woman were forcibly raped and the rapist recants his confession, you would believe his recantation?

[Answer] The case would be re-assigned: from a case of force and of warring against God.

[Question] What does that mean?

[Answer] People could be walking in a deserted place and they could be attacked by an armed robber who steals their money and kills them. God Almighty says, "Those that make war against Allah and His apostle and spread disorders in the land shall be put to death or crucified or have their hands and feet cut off on alternate sides,...[al-Ma'idah: 33].

We've applied the punishment for warring against God in the Ma'adi

principal bases for that punishment applied in that case, and the court based its decision on them.

[Question] Do the Mufti's functions overlap those of the shaykh of al-Azhar?

[Answer] The Mufti issues formal legal opinions to inform people about what is and isn't permissible. He is the official legal authority in the state, and he holds the rank of a minister.

The position of the shaykh of al-Azhar, however, is the highest religious position in the state. The chief imam heads al-Azhar Mosque and its organizations; he heads al-Azhar University and the Academy of Islamic Research which has religious scholars from all parts of the globe. That academy has nothing to do with issuing formal legal opinions, and the shaykh of al-Azhar does not hold the rank of minister.

[Question] What do you think of clergymen joining political organizations?

[Answer] A clergyman is like a judge; he must stay out of politics, and he must not interfere with the executive authority.

Politics is for politicians, and religion is for clergymen. The Mufti or the shaykh of al-Azhar should not become involved in politics.

[Question] Why?

[Answer] Because then they would become like politicians. However, there is no objection to a mufti or a shaykh of al-Azhar giving advice and pointing out to the state the religious aspect of its affairs.

[Question] Is a clergyman's position comparable to that of an attorney, a physician and so on?

[Answer] There is no priesthood in Islam, but an advocate of Islam has the right to criticize conduct without mentioning specific individuals. He can instead address conditions in the country that violate the canonical law of Islam. He has the right to criticize such conduct and to advocate a return to religion.

[Question] Can a clergyman's position be abolished? Can't a minister, a university professor and a physician advise people knowledgeably about the affairs of their religion?

[Answer] That has not been customary. In the earliest days of Islam the ministers of state were also religious scholars. At the present time, that is not possible. Would the entire cabinet be made up of clergymen?

But we do in fact have the minister of religious trusts who is a clergyman.

[Question] Is a clergyman's job an adequate job for a man?

[Answer] There is nothing wrong with that. Although politics may distract a clergyman, it should not prevent him from becoming knowledgeable about the affairs of his state. However, he must not interfere; he must only advise against conditions that violate the canonical law of Islam. Then he must advise reform.

[Question] Experience has shown that clergymen who came to power failed in spite of the fact that they were the most knowledgeable people about the affairs of religion and the state.

[Answer] There are veteran professional politicians who are more capable in politics than clergymen. There would be nothing wrong with a politician who studies religion and becomes a [religious scholar].

If a clergyman becomes involved in politics and becomes an expert politician, then he has achieved perfection.

[Question] Do clergymen read books on economics, politics and literature besides reading books on religious subjects?

[Answer] We read books in all the branches of knowledge.

[Question] Why then did clergymen at some point in time withdraw from society and allow people to flounder and stumble between what was and was not permissible?

[Answer] Clergymen did not withdraw from people. It is the world that cut them off. Any person who seeks clergymen and scholars to discuss his problem with them or to ask for a religious opinion will get an answer without delay. Our doors are open to Muslims from all over the globe. We receive many more questions and letters than those that are recorded in the daily record. There are also study groups where opinions are discussed, and the imams of mosques [are always available].

[Journalist's comment] It would not have been logical to interview His Eminence, the Mufti of Egypt, without bringing up the subject of the new Personal Status Law. We had to ask him what he thought of it.

[Answer] The Personal Status Law is derived from the canonical law of Islam. The only thing about it is that it did not go along with the more acceptable opinion of Imam Abu Hanifah's school of jurisprudence. It has been our custom in Egypt, in personal status matters as well as in issuing formal legal opinions, to follow the more acceptable of Imam Abu Hanifah's opinions. In some cases, however, we have found that Imam Abu Hanifah's school was severe, so we waived those opinions in favor of others from other schools of jurisprudence. We did this to be merciful with the people.

[Question] But some of the articles in the old Personal Status Law were derived from Ottoman law, weren't they?

[Answer] No. The Personal Status Law was not derived from any foreign laws.

[Question] What about using the police to force a woman to obey her husband?

[Answer] It is a woman's duty to obey her husband in their domicile. However, that method of executing such an order, by force and using the police, has nothing to do with Islam.

[Question] Why didn't clergymen do something to prevent such a practice?

[Answer] We did. That is why the law has been amended. Force is no longer used to enforce a wife's obedience to her husband. I think that a person who forces his wife to live with him against her will is not a decent person.

[Question] But some people resort to that to force their wives to give up their alimony and the amount of compensation that they agreed was to be paid to the wife upon the dissolution of the marriage.

[Answer] There is a provision in Islam for that. A man may divorce his wife in return for compensation to be paid by her.

[Question] Isn't there a provision in Islam that a man should leave to his wife part of the dowry and the gifts he gave her when he divorces her?

[Answer] If a wife stops loving her husband and she herself asks for a divorce, then she has to return the dowry that she received from him in full.

Before collecting my notes and concluding my interview with al-Shaykh 'Abd-al-Latif Hamzah, I asked him, "Is it wrong for a woman to work outside the home?"

[Answer] No it isn't, if she needs to work and if society needs her contribution in the work force. A woman may work provided that she observe the restrictions of Islam in her clothing. She should not associate with men unless that becomes absolutely necessary. The state must respect women's humanity, and it must provide them with their own means of transportation; it must provide them with jobs which they can perform more capably than men.

However, if the husband's income is adequate, it would be wrong for a woman to work.

[Question] Doesn't woman's work provide insurance for her and her future against any new and unexpected conditions?

[Answer] We do not object to women working. If women need to work, let them work. The proposal that was submitted by Maj Gen Sa'd al-Din al-Sharif suggesting that women go back to their homes and receive half their wages should have been looked into and adopted by the state.

8592

CSO: 4504/341

IRRIGATION MINISTER DISCUSSES DROUGHT CONTINGENCY PLANS

Cairo AL-SHA'B in Arabic 9 Apr 85 p 7

/Interview with Irrigation Minister 'Isam Radi by Mari Ya'qub: "Watch out, Gentlemen: The Early Signs of Drought Are Looming before Egypt and Its People!"

/Text/ The Nile is the artery of life. In olden times it would be venerated and we would ward off its anger, so it would not make us wretched.

Now we are putting our hands over our hearts in fear and anxiety over the approaching waves of death and drought which are working their effect in its upper reaches, to the point where we in Egypt have become very close, or even closer than that, to drought, whose destructive effects may be summarized as ruination in its various forms. It has reached the point where the area of farmland has shrunk and vital crops have been eliminated, although the present area is not adequate, we are demanding that it be increased, factories are being shut down as a result of the cutoff of electricity coming from the High Dam, shipping in the Nile is being curtailed, and we are losing tourist revenues in general.

In brief, we are facing a threat in the course of the coming years in terms of our lives, our economy and the suspension of life.

Therefore, we have sought to sound the warning bell in order to warn citizens of this danger which is looming before us, so that every citizen may play the part requested of him in order to ward this danger away.

Regarding the possibilities that Egypt might be exposed to the danger of drought, and the Irrigation Ministry's potential and available contingencies and solutions for warding off the evil of such a threat:

And on the subject of whether drought comes in normal cycles and the extent to which it is possible to predict rainfall, since the reports of the Meteorology Organization and the Water Reports Section in UNESCO state that the drought in Africa will continue to 2000:

Eng 'Isam Radi, minister of irrigation, stated "The drought comes in natural cycles, and this is not the first time. Rather, it happened in fact a number

of times, in the past in the days of our lord Joseph and the days of al-Mustansir.

"On the subject of our predictions concerning the flood, I would like to say that the Nile's intake is connected to two main elements. The first element is the water coming in from the equatorial plateau, which represents just 15 percent of the Nile's intake and comes apportioned throughout the course of the year. The variables in the monthly average turn out not to be great, and therefore the equatorial plateau has not happened to affect the Nile's intake in a perceptible fashion.

"The second element is the water coming from the Ethiopian plateau. This represents about 85 percent of the Nile's intake and changes from year to year in accordance with the state of the rains on the Ethiopian plateau, since it is possible that that can be as high as about 120 billion cubic meters a year and can decline to around 30 billion cubic meters. Therefore, the Egyptian economy is greatly affected by this source.

"Therefore, predicting the state of the flood is carried out in the Ministry of Irrigation by two methods:

"First, using the state of probabilities, by following the state of the floods for a number of years in the past and setting out percentages for these floods. This has been done for the coming water year, 1985-86, which will start in August 1985 and continue to the end of July 1986.

"The probabilities can be summarized as follows:

"There is a probability of just 1 percent that a year similar to the current water year, or less, will occur.

"There is a 50 percent probability that an average year, that is, an intake of 84 billion cubic meters, will occur.

"Moreover, it has not happened, since 613, that drought periods have occurred over more than 7 years. Moreover, we have not observed the presence of a very low intake over 2 successive years. Therefore we are optimistic, since forecasts state that next year's intake will be higher than that of the current year. This probability is founded on the previous observation, and is just for purposes of guidance."

The minister went on to say, "The second method in the ministry's predictions concerning the state of the flood is based on setting out forecasts, but that is done starting only with the month of August every year, since the rain starts to fall in the months of June and July. In the light of the quantities of rain that fall, and on the basis of the equations we have concerning the ratio of the surface runoff to the watercourses, it is possible to predict the quantity of water Egypt will receive from the 'Atbarah, al-Subat and Blue Nile Rivers during the flood period. In addition, the levels of

these rivers are monitored at specific places on the Sudanese-Ethiopian borders, since the water takes about a month, approximately, proceeding in its course from its sources to the point where it reaches Egypt."

Concerning the negotiations which have taken place with the Sudan to revive work on the Jonglei Canal:

The minister answered by saying, "There is a joint action plan to revive work on the Jonglei Canal, but the circumstances which led to the suspension of work are outside our will and are related to the southern Sudan and the disturbance that is occurring there; technical circumstances are not involved at all. We hope that these disturbances will end quickly so that we can go back to work."

Concerning the work that has been done in the case of upper Nile projects in participation with the other Nile countries:

The minister replied, "We in fact started the upper Nile projects in 1964. These include the Jonglei Canal, which is considered an upper Nile project. As regards the other projects, there is cooperation with the various Nile countries aimed at creating a joint framework for cooperative action. In the framework of that cooperation, the work we are continuing with is being arranged, /unintelligible/ the river and increasing its intake. In order for this to take place, there is a study project called the equatorial lakes plateau project in which the eight Nile countries--Egypt, the Sudan, Zaire, Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda and Burundi--are participating, and Ethiopia is attending as an observer. The basic objective of this is to determine the resources that exist in the equatorial plateau and the state of the rains, the various countries' uses and their effect on the development of the river and the proposed projects."

Concerning the possibility of adopting measures which were taken in some countries, in the form of desalinating seawater or drilling deep artesian wells to attempt to replace Nile water in a network extending through the Western Desert and the Nile valley:

The minister answered by saying, "As regards groundwater, that is very limited. We must realize that our share of Nile water is 55.5 billion cubic meters, which we consume in full, in addition to other quantities of water. The volume of the groundwater available from the valley and the entire Delta is about 5 billion cubic meters, that is, about 10 percent of the volume of the water from the Nile, and consequently it is not at all sufficient. As regards the groundwater in the Western Desert, its volume has not yet been proved to be adequate for large areas. None of the things that are being said about it are scientific, and scientific studies state that its volume is limited for use and consequently it can be used locally in these areas but cannot be transported because it is not adequate. Its production may also be uneconomic. Consequently, our main reliance is on the water of the Nile."

"As regards seawater desalination, that is very costly and its expenses are still great. Consequently, it is not possible to use it on a broad scale. However, it is possible to use it on a limited scale in areas close to the coasts and on limited projects, since its transportation is exorbitant. Therefore, the safest thing, as far as Egypt goes, is to use the water of the Nile within the limits of available quantities. However, in the event the water intake decreases and a drought occurs, there are specific measures to be taken:

"One, expansion of wells in the Delta and the valley in agricultural areas, with groundwater to be used at its maximum capacity of 5 billion cubic meters. If the drought continues for a number of years, we can gradually expand the wells, so that it will be possible to use all the water available from them.

"Two, the reuse of drainage water, which is the second resource.

"In addition, there are other points which we must provide for, for example exerting pressure /to reduce/ the water discharged for agriculture by a rate of 10 percent. In addition, the farmers must guide their use by irrigating on schedule, having the irrigation take place at night so that we can save on the runoff of water into drainage ditches during the nighttime, and eliminating compensation.

"Resisting water plants. All these measures will save water and consequently will enable us to compensate for part of the shortage of intake from the upper Nile. These are all measures the Ministry of Irrigation takes in drought years.

"It is worth pointing out that these measures and the ones that eight ministries are taking part in were presented by the minister of irrigation; they were discussed in the cabinet this week and are now being presented to the People's Assembly for approval and adoption. They may be broken down into two stages. There is an urgent stage, which is to be applied at present, which is:

"Restricting withdrawals from the High Dam to irrigation and human consumption requirements and industrial purposes, and reducing them by at least 10 percent.

"Having the Ministry of Irrigation agencies in the governorates commit themselves to refusing to give compensations for irrigation water and commit themselves to the stipulated irrigation cycles.

"Focussing on the work of eliminating illegal irrigation outlets on canals and resisting trespassing against water installations. Security personnel and water surface police will participate in this with the Ministry of Irrigation.

"Carrying out the national campaign to resist water plants in canals and drainage ditches to avoid water loss resulting from the presence of these plants.

"Rapidly repairing groundwater wells which the Ministry of Irrigation had previously constructed and outfitting them for operation when needed.

"Using agricultural drainage water by recycling it for irrigation purposes and enlarging the area while choosing suitable crops for such water, for example the Peace Canal in the 600,000-feddan irrigation district in the East Delta area, where the drainage ditches of the Jaduth Lake and al-Sarw flow together. This is also being done in al-Fayyum Governorate, in the al-Tajin drainage ditch, and the project to commingle that with water from Lake al-Manzalah is on the verge of being completed. The same thing is taking place with respect to the commingling of public drainage water in al-Buhay-rah with al-Nubariyah Canal water.

"The performance of intensified activity by the waterworks to prevent losses from the potable water pipe system, which available reports have stated exceed 60 percent.

"Regarding the second stage, the status of the measures to be adopted will be reviewed on 1 August, in accordance with the status of the rainfall in the Nile sources.

"Media and guidance campaigns are underway now and are continuing with the purpose of enlightening citizens and farmers. This is the responsibility of the media. In addition, there are seminars.

"As regards drinking water, that is subordinate to the Ministry of Housing, but we have recommendations regarding the use of drinking water in homes. First, the loss in all the drinking water systems is about 60 percent. Therefore we have to initiate a plan, starting now, to renovate these systems and change them so that the losses will be as slight as possible, in accordance with international specifications.

"The second point is guidance of water use in the homes, since it is not possible for water use to be guided when there is a single water meter for each building. Each apartment must have a meter. In addition, it is necessary to use gradated classes, as in the electricity system.

"The third point is the equipment inside the home itself, such as taps and toilet valves. All these are improperly manufactured and consequently they are rapidly damaged, so that their maintenance is costly, which prompts people to leave them unmaintained and leaking water. They do not represent a burden on a specific inhabitant as long as there is a single water meter for each building.

"In addition, the method of use common to people. This can be attributed to personal behavior, which cannot be changed by laws or other things; rather, it is up to the individual himself to pay attention to that, during use."

/Question/ What maintenance and support activity have we prepared for the High Dam, inasmuch as that is what protects Egypt from the dangers of drought?

/Answer/ The High Dam was basically designed to tolerate earthquakes of the maximum possible force, and maintenance and support activity in the High Dam is on going. Measurements are daily. Specific elements regarding the dam are measured daily to make sure that all parts of the dam are sound. In addition to that, there is a research study project on which we have started now, which will cost \$6 million, to restudy everything related to the High Dam and determine whether the Aswan area is an earthquake zone or not and the effects of these earthquakes in the future. All these studies are underway now and will end in June. Preliminary conclusions state that the High Dam is very sound from the standpoint of design to resist earthquakes up to 8 on the Richter scale, which is the maximum level. It is expected that in Aswan they will not exceed 6.5 according to these studies. There is absolutely no problem as far as the soundness of the High Dam is concerned.

/Question/ What about the three projects supplementing the High Dam?

/Answer/ There is a development project concerned with the course of the Nile river. The basic goal of this project is to study the projects which will result in protecting the course of the Nile River from scouring and protecting the projects established on it, while at the same time developing it to increase the use of the river in terms of electricity, irrigation and navigation, since there are no problems with navigation, all the barrages that have been erected and installations which will be erected to generate electricity have been used, and at the same time vessels with large drafts, tourist or commercial, pass through and no problems arise from them during specific periods or over the course of the year. The Canadian Aid Authority is financing this project in the context of a \$3 million grant to Egypt. Work on it will start in the middle of this year and it will take 3 years. The remaining projects to be carried out will be determined in the light of this project.

11887

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LEBANON

FRANJIYAH INTERVIEWED ON INTERNAL MARONITE STRUGGLE

Riyadh AL-YAMAMAH in Arabic 20 Mar 85 pp 32-33

[Interview with former president, Sulayman Franjiyah, by Dr Khalil al-Ta'iq:
"Franjiyah Tells AL-YAMAMAH, 'Israel Is the Cause of Internal Dispute among the Maronites';" in north Lebanon; date not specified]

[Text] Sulayman Franjiyah, former president of Lebanon, is considered one of that country's most prominent national figures. He played an important role in directing Lebanon's policy: he did that by undertaking political functions in the state and by opposing erroneous policies pursued by both opponents and allies. Mr Franjiyah's opposition was carried out in accordance with a clear political view. Therefore, anyone who visits north Lebanon has to meet President Franjiyah at one of his two places of refuge: his summer home in Ihdin or his winter home in Zgharta. We had this interview when we met with His Excellence Sulayman Franjiyah, the former president of Lebanon.

[Question] Do you think that bringing a national coalition government, following your suggestion that a government made up of 26 ministers be formed, could improve the situation in the country?

[Answer] I do believe that this government has not and will not do anything to serve the interests of Lebanon. I said it before, and I will say it again now: some members of this government are concerned about their own personal interests only. In their opinion, the disasters that are taking place in Lebanon are matters of secondary importance.

[Question] What will guarantee that the security and safety of Lebanese groups and sects will be achieved? Is that guarantee domestic, Arab or foreign?

[Answer] The only guarantee in my opinion lies in an agreement that the Lebanese would reach to end all fighting in their midst. In the country's modern history, infighting in Lebanon has happened only when there was a third party. If we were to go back to the infighting that happened in Lebanon, we would find that a third party, especially the West, benefited from it. The West discovered a weakness in the eastern Arab region: that weakness is sectarianism. Whenever western interests can be served in the East, the West would manipulate that weakness among citizens.

[Question] It has become widely known, Your Excellency, that Phalangist circles

are beginning to feel disgruntled. They feel frustrated because the basic risks that were taken failed. Can this be the first step in redressing an error, especially since those who are involved with Israel are a minority?

[Answer] In my opinion, Phalangist gangs, as far as the identity of their members are concerned, may be classified into two categories. One kind has faith, although such faith is unwarranted, in the Phalangist creed. It is faith that is based on misleading, false propaganda that is still being promoted by such gangs to justify their actions which, they claim, are aimed at protecting Lebanon first and Christians in Lebanon, second. This propaganda has been in existence ever since that party was established. If we were to count the number of Christians who lost their lives as a result of these gangs' treachery, that number would be larger than the number of victims who lost their lives during the past 10 years, including the 2-years' war. At any rate, I believe that anyone who builds his leadership on sectarian bases is politically bankrupt. In this country--and this is a blessing from Almighty God--there are 17 sects who have coexisted and whose members have stuck together like brothers throughout modern and ancient history. The only time they disagreed was when there was a third, foreign party. It is unfortunate that the western world knows that sectarianism is the weakness of the East. When the West decides to take any action to achieve certain objectives that serve its interests, it resorts to sectarianism. And that applies to Israel which resorted to sectarianism when there was nothing else for it to do to achieve its goals. When it decided to withdraw, it fired one shot in each of two directions, as though it were bidding both parties farewell in its fashion. However, the vigilance and awareness of the heroic and steadfast people of south Lebanon foiled that plan.

[Question] How then do you assess the Zionist enemy's withdrawal from the heroic town of Sidon and its environs?

[Answer] It is normal and historically inevitable that a usurping enemy be driven away and that invaders be defeated no matter how long it takes. There is no doubt that getting part of occupied south Lebanon out of captivity did prove that Israel cannot be defeated at the negotiations table. Sincere Arabs must be well aware of that lesson and they must understand it properly. What did Israel give Egypt, the largest Arab country, in the Camp David Accords? It gave it more restrictions, shame and humiliation. And what else, other than the consolidation of the occupation, did Israel give Lebanese negotiators who negotiated between al-Khalsah and Khaldah the ill-fated agreement that was signed on 17 May?

[Question] Your excellency, what would you state on the record on behalf of the Lebanese National Resistance Front?

[Answer] Ever since this resistance was founded, I have gone on record in every newspaper, radio or television interview and at my weekly discussions asking every Lebanese citizen to glorify those heroic young people. At all interviews I've asked that statues be put up everywhere in Lebanon to commemorate those heroes who deserve the credit for creating that atmosphere in which Israel is living in today.

[Question] Your Excellency, the United States is still claiming it can solve

the crisis of Lebanon and that of the Middle East without the Soviet Union. Do you believe the United States can do that now that President Reagan has been re-elected?

[Answer] Nowadays, President Reagan can rest when he goes to bed. The U.S. Constitution does not allow him to run for re-election more than once. Thus, for all practical purposes, from now until his second term in office expires, President Reagan does not need to maintain his popularity so he can be re-elected. Therefore, I am hoping--and I know this would be difficult to achieve--that President Reagan would wake up and consider his peace of mind and not just his physical rest.

What happened in Lebanon some 10 years ago was nothing more than an American plan in favor of Israel. That plan was devised by a Zionist well-known to our Arab and Lebanese people. He is the notorious Henry Kissinger. Five years have gone by since that notorious plan was implemented to win influence for Israel among the American people. Now that President Reagan has what he wanted--he has been re-elected--I hope, God willing, that he will begin listening to his conscience. I hope he will begin thinking, not about votes, but about the proper and true interests of the United States of America. And when the president of the United States thinks about American interests, he will not ignore the 150 million Arabs in 21 Arab countries who consume more than half the goods produced by U.S. industry, not to mention their support of the American economy. I hope he will not ignore all those Arabs in favor of 3 million Israelis who have no other source of revenue but the U.S. dollar that is granted to them by the man in the White House to buy Zionist support for his re-election effort.

[Question] Are you satisfied with Lebanon's relationship with Syria?

[Answer] No one gets credit for the distinguished relationship with Syria because this relationship has been nationally, historically and politically beneficial for the two fraternal countries.

[Question] What has become of the intra-Maronite reconciliation?

[Answer] When you say intra-Maronite reconciliation, I, a Maronite, wonder what the Maronites are disagreeing about! There is absolutely no disagreement among the Maronites. The only dispute is the one that exists between Maronites and Zionists. Unfortunately, there are among the Maronites, just as there are among members of other sects, agents for the Israeli enemy. Some of them work for Israel publicly, and some work behind the scenes, and those are more dangerous.

[Question] Do you think, Your Excellency, that the Lebanese army is now capable of taking over security functions in all of Lebanon?

[Answer] If it acts with integrity, the army can do anything the government decides should be done. The army can assume security, social or other functions. But where is that integrity?

[Question] Do you think, your excellency, that the self-confidence which the Syrians are manifesting is the product of confirmed pledges of assistance from the Soviets?

[Answer] I believe it is pointless to affirm once again that Syria makes its own independent decisions. I am speaking as a Lebanese citizen who has experienced the developments that occurred in the region. I am also proud of my distinguished relationship with the fraternal country, Syria. I believe that this is the case with all the Lebanese, except for those who sidestepped the truth and followed the course of evil.

But let's be more candid. When the United States puts all its resources at Israel's disposal so Israel can wage a war against Syria, then Syria has to look for some kind of balance. And I believe that the Soviet Union is as committed as it can be to ensuring such a balance.

[Question] We must pause to take a critical look at ourselves after everything that has happened in Lebanon. Your Excellency, the fact that you became president was something that all of Lebanon rejoiced about. However, circumstances did not help you achieve everything you had been hoping to achieve. It is being said that the cruel harassment by officers of the Deuxieme Bureau was what led to the chaos that occurred because there was no one exercising tight control over matters. What would you say to that?

[Answer] There were three of us who late in 1969 agreed to form an opposition front that was called at that time the Central Front. Speaker Kamil al-As'ad, Prime Minister Sa'ib Salam and I were really from the center because our primary concern when we formed the front was to bring about reform and not personal gain. It was because of that front that I became president and began working. Let me testify here, and God is my witness, that everything I did during my term in office was done in Lebanon's interests. Of course no one is perfect but God, and I could have taken actions that in the eyes of some people were against the interests of Lebanon. But I am affirming, as God is my witness, that I did what I did quite sincerely and conscientiously.

The first action that you are referring to in your question was that of getting politics out of the army. It is unfortunate that some officers had become too involved in politics and had forgotten their military duties. I am referring to the Deuxieme Bureau. Everyone knows that at that time the Deuxieme Bureau had reached the point of requiring every politician to wait outside the office of the Deuxieme Bureau chief to get a three-minute appointment with him. Anyone who did not do that was considered by the Deuxieme Bureau to be an enemy of the Lebanese regime. With such conduct on the part of the bureau, a politician had two alternatives to choose from: he could either leave politics or become a slave to those officers. And that, thank God, is something I did not become accustomed to.

The Central Front was formed for that purpose: to get the military out of Lebanese politics. We succeeded in doing that because from 1970 till mid 1975 conditions in Lebanon were at their best. Even the Arab oil countries envied Lebanon's prosperity. Evidence of what I am saying lies in Lebanon's 1970 budget which was 720 million Lebanese pounds. In 1974 the total budget figure was close to 3 billion Lebanese pounds. The public taxes which were in effect since before my term in office had not risen one single piaster.

Then through the Kissinger plan the United States interfered to resettle the Lebanese. The 2-years war ensued, and Lebanon scored a victory in that war.

[Question] But, Your Excellency, Lebanon was not able to use the victory that you referred to; it did not know how to use it!

[Answer] Yes, and what is very painful is that Lebanon did not benefit from its military victory. The days went by, and the Lebanese forgot the sacrifices they had made to protect their land. Then a small Arab summit conference was held in Riyadh where decisions were made, including a decision to establish an army to deter those who were fighting among themselves in Lebanon. We got that army, and it provided us with total security. Normal life was restored to Lebanon between October 1976 and February 1978. That was due to the decision made by President Hafiz al-Asad to stop the blood bath. Unfortunately, however, Kissinger's policy to implement the well-known plan continued. After the Palestinians failed to have us settled elsewhere according to the American plan, a few Lebanese groups were adopted by that plan, and the incidents which began in 1978 have continued since then.

[Question] Your Excellency, your term began in 1970 on a strong note with momentum. But before your term as president ended, the incidents broke out after a series of skirmishes and clashes that came close to being a warning. Why didn't you heed these warnings?

[Answer] I divide the 6-year term of any president in Lebanon into three stages. During the first stage, which lasts 2 years, a Lebanese president can act in a dictatorial fashion. During the second stage, which also lasts 2 years, a president has to act in a democratic fashion. But during the third and final stage of a president's term, no matter who the president is, Lebanese citizens begin to pray for that president's term to end. This is what happened with many presidents in Lebanon, and I am one of them. During the last 2 years of my term in office, Lebanese citizens did not determine their policy; it was foreigners, who had joined a few Lebanese citizens, who were determining the country's policy.

[Question] Do you believe, Your Excellency, that those who initiated the settlement conspiracy years ago are still counting on that conspiracy and hoping to carry it out?

[Answer] The conspiracy to settle the Palestinians in Lebanon began in 1974 and it is still going on. Every once in a while we find the United States working through Israel or Israel working through the United States trying to revive new shapes and forms of that plan. But, God willing, they will fail again and again as they have failed so far. And that plan will be defeated just like all the other plans have been, and Israel will fail forever and ever.

[Question] The national coexistence that north Lebanon is enjoying is a source of hope for the Lebanese. The open and conciliatory role that Zgharta is playing in that regard is a special source of hope. Unfortunately, however, we find that the situation in the capital of north Lebanon, Tripoli, is changing in the direction of bloody sectarian conflict. What does your excellency think about what is happening in Tripoli?

[Answer] I would like to see a distinction made between the situation in north

Lebanon and the situation in the capital of north Lebanon. In north Lebanon, thank God, we have all the sects that can be found in Lebanon except, unfortunately, that of our fellow Druze. All the sects live together like brothers. But in Tripoli it is regrettable that there are evil people toying with that city's security. These people are the only reason why Lebanon is in the state it is in today.

[Question] Your Excellency, your opinion of the Americans is well-known. But is there a specific approach one can use in addressing Americans to tell them the truth about our cause?

[Answer] To answer your question, let me remind you of an incident that occurred in 1973 when we, the Arabs, attacked Israel. Syria and Egypt attacked Israel on the 10th of Ramadan. On the 15th of Ramadan His Highness, the late King Faysal issued a royal decree cutting oil production five percent every day. That measure was imposed on the sixth day of the war. After that President Richard Nixon and his secretary of state Henry Kissinger began groveling to appease King Faysal.

8592

CSO: 4404/326

LEBANON

SHAYKH FADLALLAH COMMENTS ON EXPLOSION OUTSIDE HIS HOME

Kuwait AL-TALI'AH in Arabic 20 Mar 85 pp 26-27

[Interview with al-Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah by Zaynah Sharim: "The Most Learned al-Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah Tells AL-TALI'AH, 'The People of Lebanon Will Survive and the Occupation Is a Condition That Will Pass'"; in Beirut, date not specified]

[Text] "I expect a Lebanese and an Arab reaction to the action taken by the Resistance."

"Factors for forcing the enemy to withdraw are numerous."

When al-Sayyid Muhammad Hasan Fadlallah inquired about the name of the magazine we represented and we told him it was AL-TALI'AH, he welcomed the magazine and its course. He also welcomed the opportunity to be interviewed by the magazine, and he was pleased that the interview would appear on its pages.

It was natural for the conversation with the most learned Fadlallah to begin with a reference to the explosion that had targeted him and killed many people in the area surrounding his home.

He pondered what the conflict had meant to him, and he reflected upon the effects that the action taken by the Resistance would have locally and in the Arab world. In these matters al-Shaykh Fadlallah has his own private view.

The text of the interview with al-Shaykh Fadlallah follows:

[Question] What is your view of the criminal act of having a car full of explosives blown up in the neighborhood around your home?

[Answer] We have been living with this tragedy and massacre, which bears the real, prominent characteristics of its perpetrators, Israel and its allies inside the country. As we live with this tragedy, we tell those who sent this bomb, "The message has arrived, and we understood all its implications. We will continue to stand on the scene to defend the freedom of man in Lebanon and the freedom of man in the region." All those who are playing with fire, those who created the tragedy of the Lebanese people, will know that sooner or later they will be burned.

We are standing up to say that we will continue to be a force siding with all countries, with all the faithful and with all Muslims and freedom fighters until Israel gets out of Lebanon and out of the region as well. We will maintain that posture until all of Israel's allies inside the country are defeated. We are horrified by the tragedy, but we will not be destroyed by it. I remind all my brothers who have expressed their feelings and sentiments toward me that I will stay with them and that my presence on the scene will be like that of a sword of freedom. I remind them that we will continue to stand up to the forces of arrogance, colonialism and Zionism inside the country and abroad. They are using death to intimidate us, but we come from a group of people whose leader said, "To us death is an ordinary matter, and dying for a cause is an honor bestowed upon us by God!"

[Question] Israel's current brutal and barbaric practices in south Lebanon and its mistreatment of citizens, particularly the new method of surrounding villages and using force to drive citizens out of their land, leads one to wonder how far will Israel go in its brutality? What is Israel seeking to accomplish by such actions? And will Israel succeed in achieving its aspirations in south Lebanon?

[Answer] I believe that Israel's practices are part of its method of applying psychological pressure on citizens in south Lebanon to keep them from thinking about taking action against the occupation. It wants to keep them from thinking about continuing to take action against the Israeli occupation of south Lebanon first and against Israel's attempt to dominate Lebanon's and the region's capabilities.

Israel has seen that the people of south Lebanon have broken the barrier of fear and are now viewing the Israeli soldier as an ordinary person against whom all methods of confrontation may be used. They see the Israeli soldier as a soldier who can be brought down, killed and wounded. Therefore, Israel has been trying to restore the esteem in which it was held so it can hold on to the myth of being a conquering state whose soldiers are invincible. It is therefore trying to punish the people of south Lebanon for the negative feelings they have toward Israel and for the decisive positions they are assuming against it. Forcing people to leave their homes may be one of the psychological methods Israel is using to try to defeat the people of south Lebanon. But we believe that the people of south Lebanon have become immune to forced evacuation and homelessness; they have become immune to wounds, to pain and to martyrdom. Therefore, such methods will not accomplish much. In fact, residents of south Lebanon will resist all that with unflagging steadfastness: they may suffer pain, but they will not be crushed by it.

Having endured many of these setbacks that occurred throughout their history, our people have learned a profound lesson from this experience. They've learned that the people survive and that all occupations, which are times during which the people are dominated and controlled, are conditions that will pass. It is the people who survive if they handle their problem and their destiny well.

[Question] Do you think the Zionist enemy will carry out his promise and withdraw from south Lebanon eventually?

[Answer] This is not a matter of keeping a promise; this is a decision that Israel has to make. If it stays in Lebanon, it will face a real and hitherto unprecedented war of attrition.

[Question] How is the question of those who have been deported from south Lebanon being handled, and how is this region's suffering being handled?

[Answer] Attempts are being made to establish a public relief organization that would come up with resources that would enable it to do what it can to meet these people's needs.

We feel that there is a common conspiracy being carried out by many parties who do not want the revolutionary movement against Israel in the Arab countries to grow. They think that the movement in south Lebanon is in an advanced stage and that it could be contagious and spill over into Arab countries. They want these Arab countries to become convinced that coming to an agreement with Israel and yielding to the enemy and those behind him is essential. Therefore, we believe that those Arab countries are in collusion with Israel and the United States and some of the political factions in Lebanon. We believe they are involved in a process of applying pressure to south Lebanon to subjugate the people there and to prevent similar situations from developing elsewhere and putting pressure on political conditions in the region. I can see similarities between this Israeli attack and the Israeli-U.S. attack on Beirut when the liquidation of armed Palestinians was being sought because it was feared that they might be able to act freely in opposing capitulatory conditions, [if not now], at least in the future. Now, the liquidation of armed citizens in south Lebanon is being sought because it is feared they might carry out their activities outside the boundaries of south Lebanon.

[Question] Do you expect what is happening in south Lebanon to have an effect on residents of the occupied land in Palestine?

[Answer] I expect the situation in south Lebanon to create a new situation among the people of the occupied land because they are benefiting from the experience of south Lebanon. An unarmed person, unsupported by any country or international power can stand up to Israel and can defeat its arrogance. We expect this from all those on the Palestinian confrontation lines inside the country who are against the Israelis there.

[Question] What are the possible implications for the Resistance and for the liberation of Lebanon by the Resistance regarding the future of Lebanon and particularly its internal economic problems?

[Answer] Actually, I do not wish to separate one situation in Lebanon from another. I regard the economic war as inseparable from the political war and the war over security. The faction that is in power has experienced with all the resources it has the outcome of a policy that emphasized that faction's domination of the state and placed most of the state's resources in its hands: economic, administrative, political, military and such similar resources.

Therefore, I believe that an economic war is a political war just as much as the war on the contact lines, which was a destructive war in which a neighborhood

was destroyed, was a political war. Those people do not wish to give up what they consider to be guarantees and what we consider to be policies. Therefore, they want to use everything they have to put pressure on the powerless to make those powerless people eager and anxious to get their approval and their sympathy, thus offering them new concessions and relinquishing rights that were stolen in the past and that they want to steal now.

I see no indication that there can be a decisive solution to this economic war unless the regime is changed completely. As long as the regime is headed by a merchant who is involved in commercial operations, speculates in the market and approaches politics with a mercenary, racist mentality, I do not think it likely that any problem in Lebanon can be solved.

Lebanon's problem cannot be partitioned. Lebanon's problem is the problem of the entire system. The analyses or conditions that are brought up here and there are tantamount to giving a patient who needs a complicated surgical procedure aspirin.

[Question] What is your view of the future of Lebanon?

[Answer] I believe that we cannot predict the future of Lebanon, but it is my opinion that the future of Lebanon will be shaped by the wishes of the Lebanese people. If the Lebanese people want to take proper action to effect a radical change in the country, then Lebanon will have a bright, unified and just future. Lebanon will become a country that will take action to serve its people without any regard to sectarian privileges and any complex political conditions.

But if the people of Lebanon continue to indulge themselves in the political and sectarian games they are playing and if they allow themselves to be used by the ambitious and the greedy inside the country and abroad, the future of Lebanon will be that of mere groups divided by political conditions in the region.

8592

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OMAN

MANPOWER DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS

Dubayy KHALEEJ TIMES in English 11 Apr 85 p 4

[Text]

MUSCAT—Extensive efforts are on in the country to mobilise the national work force to take charge of development activities, sooner than later. The authorities in charge of manpower development have chalked out plans for different sectors in coordination with various ministries and government agencies.

The Sultanate's total work force at the end of 1983 was 299,051, including 63,406 employed in ministries and state agencies. While the percentage of nationals in government service was 61.1, the private sector continued to be dominated by expatriates. Indications are that the country's reliance on foreign work force would continue during the Third Five-Year Plan (1986-90) which includes many infrastructure projects.

Meanwhile several training schemes are gaining in prominence and Omani youth is joining technical, managerial, administrative and teaching cadres in good numbers. The coordination between the ministries of education and youth affairs and Social Affairs and Labour during the Second Plan (1981-85) has paved the way for progressive job orientation from the secondary school stage and opening up of vistas for vocational training within the country.

There are nine vocational training institutes in various parts of the country, together turning out 2,000 technicians a year. The setting up last year of the Oman Technical Industrial College (OTIC) in the Capital area has made specialisation possible. The training programmes at

OTIC, particularly in computer technology, are highly advanced and the increasing number of both boys and girls joining its courses underlines the national youth's growing participation in the country's development process.

Among the major training schemes is a multi-routine programme run by Petroleum Development Oman. The company also sponsors secondary school graduates for higher education overseas. The enrolment at the Mina Al Fahal training institute is expected to double by the end of the year when it gets its new premises. There are 4,000 jobs at PDO alone for nationals, with unlimited opportunities for advancement.

Besides, the institute of bankers, teachers' training institutes in the Capital area and Salalah, the institute of health sciences at Wattayah in the City suburbs, the institute of public administration at Khuweir are all focal points in the public sector. Then the Oman Women's Association, has been conducting training programmes to bolster the women's work force.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour has made it mandatory for establishments employing a minimum of 20 people to contribute a certain percentage of their monthly wage bill as vocational training levy.

For companies with an employee strength of 20 to 49, the levy is 2 per cent of the wage bill; 3 per cent for 50 to 300 employees; 5 per cent for 301 to 1,000; and 6 per cent for 1,001 and above.

The funds thus collected serve to boost the government's vocational training programmes, which the private sector establishments welcome

and willingly support.

While the banking sector is making an all-out bid to achieve a 90 per cent Omanisation target for workforce by the end of next year, the sub-committee in charge of banking at the Chamber of Commerce and industry has sought a "slight accommodation" from the authorities to help realise the objective effectively and efficiently.

The sub-committee's chairman Shaikh Kamis Ali Al Hashar, feels that the relaxation of the 'Government bond' stipulation for students being sent abroad for advanced courses and training can be of extra help to the banking sector.

Youths who are trained in accounts, computers and subjects pertaining to banking may be given a choice between government jobs and banking career, Shaikh Khamis says.

If accepted by the authorities, Shaikh Khamis's proposal will have a welcome impact on the banking sector which seems poised to attain up to 70 per cent Omanisation by 1986.

CSO: 4400/145

OMAN

NEW PORT PLANNED

Dubayy KHALEEJ TIMES in English 3 May 85 p 11

[Text]

MUSCAT—The Omani government has frozen plans to build new deep-water berths at Mina Qaboos, the country's largest port, and is looking at alternative sites, Communications Minister Salem bin Nasser Al Bousaidi said.

The expansion project would have doubled the cargo handling capacity of the port on the outskirts of Muscat to four million tonnes a year at a cost of about \$290 million.

Tenders were expected to go out late last year or early this year.

In the annual report of the Port Services Corporation, released yesterday, Salem said his ministry had undertaken feasibility studies for developing another port to meet increasing demand for freight handling capacity.

PSC sources said the alternative would be Qurayat, 55km southeast of Muscat, and the new port there would be ready in about four years.—Reuter

Transshipment point

- The Sultanate of Oman's Premier port, Mina Qaboos, in the Capital area, has been showing definite prospect of turning into transshipment spot.

Al Fayha Shipping Agencies, local agents for CMA French shipping line, who have been operating transshipment and feeder services between Muscat and ports along the Pakistan-India coast

have found rising response from the trade.

CMA's fully-containerised modern fleet calls bi-monthly at Mina Qaboos, bringing in cargo from European ports. In two voyages so far, 374 TEU were brought in for transshipment to Karachi and Bombay, 207 TEU aboard Ville du Ponant III and 167 by Ville du Sahara.

"Chances seem rosy. These sophisticated vessels, each of 1000-TEU capacity, should do much better in the near future," Al-Fayha's Executive Director M. Zafir Hassen told Khaleej Times.

The third CMA vessel, due here tomorrow, is bringing in 230 containers, 160 of them for transshipment to Karachi, Bombay and Cochin. The vessel would later sail on to Dubai, Dammam and Bahrain.

A feeder vessel, Theodor Fontane, is due at Mina Qaboos shortly, to effect prompt transshipment. On her voyage to Muscat, she would have a full load of 350 containers, "and we expect her to return, fully loaded," Mr Hassen said.

"This is the first time that containers are being carried to Cochin, after calls at Karachi and Bombay. . . it is certainly a healthy sign."

CMA's representative Stuart Ballin was here recently to host a reception on board Ville du Ponant III for the port officials. It was the French official's first visit after signing the agency agreement with Al-Fayha Shipping

CSO: 4400/145

SAUDI ARABIA

SIGNIFICANCE OF SAUDI BUSINESSMEN'S TRIP TO UNITED STATES VIEWED

London AL-MAJALLAH in Arabic 24-30 Apr 85 pp 37-39

[Text] Last week 46 Saudi businessmen arrived in the United States representing large, medium and relatively small businesses in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In the course of 11 days the members of this delegation visited four American cities--Washington, Los Angeles, Indianapolis and Boston--to discuss the establishment of joint ventures in the Kingdom with American companies. The mission of this delegation is considered a new departure in American-Saudi trade relations from many standpoints.

Joint ventures in the past have led to some large American cities, such as Houston in the state of Texas, being transformed into industrial centers characterized by rapid growth rates. The Saudi businessmen have been visiting these cities over past years as individuals, and the American and Saudi governments have borne the greatest burden in solving the problems that impede joint ventures. Although the Saudi government on this occasion sent the deputy minister of trade as the head of the Saudi businessmen's delegation, the members of the delegation were made to understand that they had to take the initiative themselves.

Second, this is the first time that the American Chamber of Commerce, which is famous for its great power and influence, has worked to organize the visit of a foreign trade delegation. The Saudi Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry also participated in organizing this visit.

Third, the amount of preparation for this 11-day visit surpassed that of any former trade visit. The consulting company responsible for the organizational details of this trip--Intermarket Network Corporation--had to review tens of thousands of American companies that were candidates for entering joint ventures. Then it considered about 5,000 requests for meetings with the members of the Saudi delegation. Finally it put together a firm itinerary for this delegation. This company devoted 15 employees in Washington alone to prepare for the visit of the Saudi delegation to that city.

The Saudi delegation encompassed a wide range of commercial and industrial sectors. Moreover, many members of the delegation represented not only the Saudi market, but also the regional market including Kuwait, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and some regional markets outside the Arab Gulf area.

Oil, Etc.

Observers see in this Saudi initiative a new indication that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia realized that it cannot depend on oil and petroleum-related industries alone in developing the Saudi economy and improving the standards of living in the Kingdom. It realizes that it must exploit its huge oil-generated capital reserves to develop all sectors of the economy in the same way as other wealthy countries have done that are similar to the Kingdom in size, such as Sweden and Switzerland.

John Sarba, the chairman of the board of Intermarket, told reporters, "The non-petroleum sectors of the economy in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are the fastest growing and will be the driving force behind the next growth period in the Kingdom." He also said that with the movement of the Saudi government away from a policy of subsidization, Saudi businessmen increasingly have come to examine joint ventures with companies from America, Europe, Japan and other foreign countries.

In 1984, the size of the American balance of trade deficit was more than \$100 billion, including a \$34 billion trade imbalance with Japan. For this reason, American companies now realize that increasing exports is fundamental to maintaining the standard of living in the United States. In the past these companies were indifferent about seeking to open new export markets. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia occupies ninth place in terms of importing American goods. In addition, the Kingdom is one of only five countries with which the United States enjoys a significant surplus in the balance of trade. The visit of the Saudi delegation to the United States comes in the wake of a visit to the United States by Turgut Ozal, the Turkish prime minister. Turkey is another of the five countries with which Washington enjoys a balance of trade surplus. In its visit, the Turkish delegation basically focused on the need to establish more joint ventures in Turkey with American firms.

In the past, trade delegations visiting the United States spent most of their time at reception parties and dinners, and did not have a significant opportunity to discuss economic projects in a serious manner. Meeting the appropriate person for a joint venture or a trade exchange was governed by happenstance. In this case, however, a computer was used for the detailed preparations of the itinerary of the Saudi delegation so that each member of the delegation would meet with an American representative of the sector in which the Saudi worked.

Lebanese Origin

Another American consulting company named Transnational Associates participated with Intermarket in preparing for this visit. Its representative, Jean Abi-Nadir accompanied the members of the Saudi delegation throughout their visit to the United States. Jean Abi-Nadir is a member of a well-known Lebanese family that immigrated to the United States. He is also a prominent member in Arab-American organizations.

Numerous other American organizations participated in the preparation of the Saudi delegation's schedule in each of the American cities that it visited. In Washington members of the delegation met with members of the Senate, the House of Representatives and senior aids. In addition, they met with American businessmen and heard a speech delivered by Marion Barry, the mayor of Washington, who is trying to promote the American capital, which is the administrative headquarters for many large American firms although American law prohibits factories in Washington itself in order to maintain its residential character.

The Saudi delegation was headed by Dr 'Abd-al-Rahman al-Zamil, the vice minister of Commerce. Its members included 'Abdallah al-Dabbagh, the secretary general of the Saudi Federation of Chambers of commerce and Industry, who received his education in the United States; 'Abdallah al-Dahlan, the secretary general of the Chamber of Commerce in Jeddah, who also was educated in the United States; and 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Dukhayl, the chairman of the board of the Consulting Center for Financing and Investment in Riyadh. The delegation also included a number of prominent trade personalities, including 'Abdallah Alireza, chairman of the board of the Zaynil Industrial Establishment in Jeddah; Khalid al-Turki, chairman of the board of Tradeco Company in Dhahran; and Dr 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Ahali, the chairman of the board of the consulting company Andarin International in Riyadh.

Members of the visiting Saudi delegation stressed that the petroleum boom period led to an extremely high level of financing of basic services projects in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, despite the tremendous area of land and the relatively small population on it. In their discussions, the members of the delegation focused on obtaining the support of American businessmen for a free trade zone that could serve regional markets in the entire area.

The organizers of this visit acknowledge that they intentionally excluded Houston and New York from the itinerary because they believe that most of the joint venture possibilities with firms in Houston have already been examined. They also believe that the local government in New York is not endowed with the gift of creativity and would not undertake a significant effort to promote companies in the city that are capable of exporting.

Sarba believes that many people mistakenly think that Washington is a city that only has bureaucrats and lawyers, but this city has become the headquarters for hundreds of large American manufacturing and services companies. Among the reasons for this is the ease of doing business with the American government apparatus in the capital.

As for Boston, it is one of the principal American port cities and is famous for its university and the school's research center. It is also the location of Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Boston has become the premier technology center in the United States and the headquarters for many large Arab-American companies. The itinerary for the visit also included Los Angeles because it is the largest American city on the West Coast and the largest trade and industry center there.

Success of Mission

The visit's itinerary included Indianapolis because of the great efforts the city council is making to encourage exports, especially in the fields of agriculture, medical equipment and new technologies. The itinerary did not include Atlanta, which competes with Houston as the industrial capital of the American south, because Intermarket held a conference there for joint ventures in 1983, and because the current mayor of the city, Andrew Young, who was formerly the American ambassador to the United Nations, heads a number of American trade delegations to many countries of the world, including a number of Arab countries.

Observers believe that the tremendous success of the Saudi trade delegation's mission is represented by the contracts in the service industry. American companies still maintain their leadership position in this field. It is worth noting that American manufacturing companies have been less successful competing in recent years with Japanese and European companies and companies from countries that have turned to industry more recently in East and Southeast Asia.

The members of the Saudi delegation represented 117 manufacturing and services fields, although their numbers did not exceed 46. These fields included capital intensive areas such as defense and naval contracts, computerized avionics equipment, automobile assembly plants, the elevator industry, clothing, pharmaceuticals, civil engineering, construction and transportation. In addition, the areas represented included medium and light industries such as the manufacture of air powered machinery and greenhouses; the establishment of fisheries; the production of seedless grapes; the manufacture of adhesive materials, luggage, metal panels, various types of ground coverings and reinforced glass panels; lumber and food industries; legal services; travel and recreation services and some of the areas of arts and education.

Experts including Sarba and Dr Dennis Winters, the director of the Saudi department at Intermarket and an advisor to the Saudi government, expect that this visit also benefitted American businessmen because it made them more aware of the Saudi method of trade and management, and it provided the Saudi visitors an opportunity to establish the appropriate contacts without wasting a number of months making useless contacts.

A number of government departments welcomed the Saudi businessmen, including the State Department and the Commerce Department. Although some of the joint ventures that were agreed upon will require the sale of American high-tech equipment to the Kingdom, many of these joint ventures will also require an expansion of the industrial base in both the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United States. Estimates indicate that every billion dollars in exports of new American goods and services leads to the creation of 25,000 to 30,000 new jobs in the United States. This in itself is an important political factor because the unemployment rate in the United States is currently 7.3 percent compared with 5.2 percent during the Jimmy Carter administration.

12951

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10 June 1985

SAUDI ARABIA

COMMENTARY ON OMAN-SOUTH YEMEN RAPPROCHEMENT

Riyadh AL-YAMAMAH in Arabic 3 Apr 85 pp 46-47

[Editorial by 'Amir al-Jabiri: "Omani Maneuvers?"]

[Text] The statement issued by His Majesty Sultan Qabus bin Sa'id, the Sultan of Oman, in which he said that the time had come for the restoration of diplomatic relations between his country and the Democratic Republic of Yemen following the protracted dialog between them, and in which he also said that the mechanics of this restoration would not exceed a specific number of weeks, carries many significant political implications. This is especially the case since the statement was issued at a time when the Sultanate of Oman is carrying out extensive preparations to conduct the huge "Ra'd" [thunder] military maneuvers, in which the various branches of the Omani armed forces--the land forces, navy and air force--will participate.

The Omanis were not restrained concerning the statement of their sultan. In fact, after 2 days they added to it by indicating that the exchange of ambassadors between Oman and the Democratic Republic of Yemen would take place within the next few days in accordance with the agreement that Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates had worked for under the aegis of the Gulf Cooperation Council. This is an agreement of principles that was signed between the two countries in 1981.

The truth is that the Sultanate of Oman has acted with a great deal of wisdom rather than skepticism concerning this point. Relations with Aden are even now an extremely sensitive issue, and any doubts or skepticism, even in the narrowest of limits, would affect this question. So what does it mean that there are huge maneuvers involving nearly half of the Omani military?

Omani Minister of Information 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Rawwas has denied any link between the Omani maneuvers and current events in the Arab and international arenas. He stated that these maneuvers are only aimed at demonstrating the ability of the Omani armed forces to protect the nation and defend its territory.

This denial, however, is not as significant as other statements that make direct mention of relations with the Democratic Republic of Yemen. The issue here appears to be more sensitive and more tangible. There are clear indications that the Sultanate of Oman is desirous of relations with Aden and seeks the natural fulfillment of this through the exchange of ambassadors. This will help spur the recently stalled dialog over the borders and will keep the talks open and ongoing via direct contacts through ambassadors.

However, why do we raise the subject in this manner when it is said that there have been statements issued by an Omani military official that indicate the Omanis believe that threats to them originate from either Iran or Democratic Yemen?

Despite the Omani ambassador to Kuwait's official denial of what was attributed to the Omani military official, the situation required other signs demonstrating the sincerity of Omani intentions, especially toward South Yemen. The Omani position toward Iran is well known and there is nothing that justifies a softer Omani position in discussing relations with Teheran. Iran itself has imposed the general nature and form of these relations by persisting in the war with Iraq, hinting from time to time at threats to international shipping in the Strait of Hormuz and maintaining over time that it seeks to export the Iranian revolution to the states of the region.

Therefore, the softening here is directed at democratic South Yemen. Omani relations with South Yemen are in their early stages and are characterized by a great deal of sensitivity in view of the long estrangement of the two sides, an estrangement caused by the war launched by communist gangs in the Dhofar region against the regime in Muscat and supported at that time by the Democratic Republic of Yemen.

In addition to this sensitivity it is an interesting point that the Sultanate of Oman has characterized the military maneuvers--Ra'd--as a confrontation between the sultanate and the "Marxist state of Marmul" that shares a border with the sultanate and this border is in dispute between Oman and this Marxist state of Marmul.

This point may permit some to be harsh in their interpretations and explanations, but the issue in my estimation is nothing more than a mere name given as a result of longstanding hostility to communism and marxism.

In any case, the Omani maneuvers currently being conducted have spurred various concerns. They are extremely large maneuvers measuring the Omani military capability, and 10,000 soldiers and officers from the three branches of the Omani military are participating. With them are large numbers of equipment --2,500 pieces, In other words, the size of these maneuvers exceed the size of the latest GCC maneuvers.

Beyond this, the maneuvers are being conducted under unusual circumstances. The war in the Gulf has intensified and the warning bells of the war lead one to believe that flareups will increase. The war prompted Kuwait to announce certain preparations after the latest land battles between Iraq and Iran took place 50 km from the Kuwait border and after it became clear that Tehran had long-range missiles that it began to use against Iraqi cities, in particular the capital, Baghdad. The most important thing in my view is that the Omanis have policies and positions that are clear and that they do not try to hide. Therefore, any action on their part is undertaken seriously and corresponds

with the clarity of their positions. Dealing with Oman are conducted on this basis and in accordance with this view.

Therefore, it was inevitable that Muscat would say something to calm the most concerned and sensitive parties, and they have said it.

12951

CSO: 4404/301

SYRIA

DEFENSE MINISTER INTERVIEWED ON ARMY'S PREPAREDNESS

Riyadh AL-YAMAMAH in Arabic 20 Mar 85 pp 34-35

[Interview with Lt Gen Mustafa Talas, minister of defense and deputy prime minister: "Syria's Minister of Defense Tells AL-YAMAMAH, 'We Have Weapons That Can Strike Deep Inside Israel';" in Damascus, date not specified]

[Text] Lt Gen Mustafa Talas, deputy prime minister, minister of defense and first deputy commander-in-chief of the army and armed forces in the Syrian Arab Republic is almost one of the most outstanding military leaders in the Arab homeland. Lt Gen Talas is an outstanding military leader not because he is a senior officer who performs numerous military and political functions, but because he is an enthusiastic reader and an outstanding author who has authored a collection of political, military and literary books. Therefore, a conversation with Lt Gen Mustafa Talas is always enjoyable. It is also for this reason that we conducted this interview with him in his office in the Ministry of Defense Building in Damascus.

[Question] Now that the Eighth Regional Congress of the Socialist Arab Ba'th Party has completed its business and elected a central committee and regional leaders, and now that President Hafiz al-Asad has been re-elected to a new constitutional term in office, how do you see the future shaping up in Syria?

[Answer] The speech that was delivered by President Hafiz al-Asad at the opening session of the Eighth Regional Congress of the Socialist Arab Ba'th Party clearly outlined what the future will look like locally, in the Arab region and internationally. The next stage is a natural extension of the previous stage in our country's contemporary history. We will work hard to avoid the pitfalls and mistakes that impeded the course of our country.

[Question] What do you think of the job that the Syrian Arab armed forces are doing in opposing the forces of invasion and aggression?

[Answer] The battle against the forces of invasion, aggression, conspiracy and evil will continue as long as these forces remain over our sacred Arab land. This is a battle between good and evil. Our enemies want us to be humiliated and to cringe and surrender in this battle. Ever since the treason of Camp David and the concessions that followed it, the enemies of our nation have been summoning their strength and using all the powers of evil and aggression to deal a blow to

Syria's steadfastness. They want to undermine it and dissipate its energies. They are doing this to make our country accessible to them so they can come into the country, plunder its resources, wipe out its civilization and humiliate its proud people. They want to make the people yield to their wishes and desires; they want to settle the ongoing conflict in favor of the usurping conquerors; and they want to quash Arab rights. They want our people to become more fragmented and to experience a greater sense of homelessness and loss. However, our people, who are strong-willed and who have profound faith in the inevitability of their victory, have resolved to confront all the forces that are hostile to our Arab nation. They've resolved to confront reactionaries and clients inside the country or the forces of invasion and aggression abroad. All the arms and ammunition given to the racist Zionist state by invaders and conspirators to destroy the will of our Arab nation will prove to be useless. Truth will score victory over falsehood, and our proud people and our armed forces, who are becoming more powerful and stronger every day, will drive back the aggressors.

Ever since the inception of the Corrective Movement, which was led by President Hafiz al-Asad on November 16, 1970, our armed forces have been involved in the process of building the country and making good use of its large human resources. On that basis a number of construction and production organizations have been established. They are the Military Housing Organization, the Organization for Implementing Military Construction, the Military Transportation Organization and the Department of Production Projects. Other organizations were established, and these organizations were able to make a major contribution toward solving the housing crisis and the communications crisis. They also took actual part in implementing development plans in the areas of the economy, production, health and construction. These organizations performed these functions in addition to their principal functions in the armed forces. These organizations have undergone considerable development, and their projects, which have grown from million dollar projects to billion dollar projects, have changed: what used to be limited projects have become major projects that require specific and broad experience. By evaluating the operations of organizations affiliated with the armed forces, we can say that the work they did and the projects they carried out did play an effective role in pushing forward the process of building the country, reconstructing it and achieving its awakening. That is a process that covered every facility in the country, and the credit for that goes to the wise directions of our leader, Hafiz al-Asad.

[Question] The armed forces of the Syrian Arab Republic will celebrate their 40th anniversary this year. Could you talk to us about the evolution of these forces, bearing in mind the fact that in recent years we've had to face tremendous challenges to the future of our nation?

[Answer] I can say, as we begin a new year in the life of our brave armed forces, that today we are stronger, more relentless, more determined, more resolute and more convinced that we will pursue the course of liberation and construction under the wise and courageous leadership of President Hafiz al-Asad. When we review the evolution of our armed forces, we must take into account the development they underwent in quality and numbers. To put it in more specific terms, it may be said that our armed forces are becoming more modern every day in every way. We are developing fighters who can face all situations and contingencies and who can handle advanced and complex weapons.

Our armed forces are also being provided with arms and with the most modern weapons and materiel so they can oppose the enemies of our people who receive from U.S. imperialism all kinds of modern and advanced weapons to attack us, kill our people and attempt to destroy our civilization. In all the battles they fought with the enemy our fighters have demonstrated superior expertise in handling the most advanced and most complicated weapons. They exceeded all expectations by their handling of these weapons, proving thereby the importance of the training, preparation and educational and awareness processes they have been and are continuing to undergo. Our fighters are continuously being trained and educated in a manner that is more far-reaching and precise and suitable to the requirements of the difficult period our people have been experiencing against the forces of invasion and aggression. With regard to the development of weapons and materiel, our forces have made tremendous strides forward. They have the power and strength with which they can confront all contingencies. They rely on their own resources and on their friends in the world to acquire what they need, and they will do anything to ensure that their requirements and needs are met.

I can say that we are determined to continue our victorious course of opposing invaders and aggressors who will not be able to damage the pride and greatness of our Arab nation. We derive our strength from our Arab masses, our faith, our resolve and our will. We derive our strength from our friends who help us, and we derive strength from the peoples of the world who stand by our side in our effort to liquidate the pillars of imperialism and Zionism. The strength we've gained will enable us to defeat all the schemes that are being devised against us, and it will enable us to put up a steadfast resistance to defend the interests of our Arab nation to protect which our armed forces were established in the first place.

[Question] Syria has set forth the notion of a strategic balance with the Zionist enemy as a principal step that has to be taken to achieve victory. Can you, Lt Gen Talas, tell us how much of this strategic balance has been achieved by Syria?

[Answer] Our country has actually made considerable progress in building up its own strength and achieving a strategic balance with the enemy who, supported by imperialist forces, has been trying to impose his will and force our people into a course of servility, submission and capitulation. It is very plain to us through the treason of Camp David what the enemy is doing on our land. We are aware of the brutal, barbaric acts he is committing against our people. One massacre after the other is committed in the name of the Camp David peace and in the name of the Israelis' peace. Zionist expansion and settlement operations are continuing steadily in an unprecedented manner, not to mention the Israeli invasion of Lebanon which was carried out with the blessings of the Camp David process and under the protection of the Americans.

What kind of peace is this that is being called for?

Our Syrian Arab country understood the truth about the Zionist presence [in our midst] a long time ago; we understood its implications, its objectives and its goals a long time ago. Our country's view proved to be right. That view became clearer and more evident when the Zionists invaded Lebanon to achieve the

ambitions they have in south Lebanon where there is water, fertile soil and a strategic location. South Lebanon is also a route that can be used to attack our Arab nation by destroying its steadfast stronghold, Syria. Israel made enormous efforts to achieve that: it amassed large military resources for that, and it received help from U.S. imperialism and its allies. However, Israel's attempts failed. Our fighters were able to thwart Israel's attempts with their stronger resolve and determination, and they were assisted by our Arab masses who are fighting voluntarily for themselves and for their future.

[Question] What is the Syrian Arab army doing to confront the challenges that our Arab people are facing?

[Answer] Our brave armed forces proved themselves capable of confronting the challenges that our Arab people faced in the past. Under the present situation, in which our country is being exposed to conspiracies and threats, our armed forces are more prepared than ever to oppose all the schemes that invaders and clients have devised for us and all schemes whose aim is to subjugate us and bring an end to our struggle.

When our armed forces were founded, they were imbued with a strong sense of nationalism. Thus, they devoted themselves to serve the Arab masses and their causes. That has been the course of their struggle from the beginning. They fought honorable battles to defend the Arab character of Palestine, and they participated in many of the events that had to do with the future of the Arab nation. This is what the leader, al-Asad was talking about when he said, "Ever since its inception our army has chosen to serve as an Arab army. The choice it made was a more difficult choice, a choice that is made only by men who believe, who persevere and who can endure hardships and make sacrifices for the noblest of objectives. Our army chose that course in numerous positions, and that choice plus the countless numbers of army personnel who died in action manifested the army's honor, manliness and pride.

[Question] Do you think, Your Excellency, that the racist Zionist enemy will accept this strategic balance that Syria is trying to achieve? Experience has shown us that Israel will resort to a policy of pre-emptive strikes to prevent the Arab nation from building up its strength.

[Answer] We are now much stronger than we were in 1982. We have very advanced weapons that can reach deep inside the Zionist state. It is true that we have not achieved the required balance, since the United States has been lavishly giving Israel many advanced weapons. And the United States will even give Israel weapons from its own arsenal when the situation calls for it. The United States gives Israel weapons to make it stronger than all the Arabs put together.

Our strategy depends on causing the largest possible number of casualties in the enemy's ranks. This is what we can do now quite forcefully and efficiently. Any pre-emptive strike, as such a strike may be called, will not be tantamount to a military picnic this time. Israel will pay a high price in losses for such a pre-emptive strike, and that is what the Zionist enemy fears and is trying to avoid.

[Question] Some press sources are saying and reporting that advanced Soviet weapons are being operated by Soviet experts only.

[Answer] This is not true at all, and it is not true on all levels. I personally signed the agreement with our Soviet friends in Moscow. This agreement clearly and unequivocally stipulates that these weapons and bases be placed under the command of the commander-in-chief of the army and the armed forces in Syria, President Hafiz al-Asad. In case of the president's absence, they are under my command as minister of defense and first deputy commander-in-chief. If both of us are absent, then these weapons are under the command of the chief of staff. Let this be known and clear.

[Question] It is also being reported in these press circles that the number of Soviet experts in Syria is astronomical? How many of those friends do we have in Syria?

[Answer] This is a military secret that cannot be revealed. But I can say that the figures that are being rumored by these press circles are not true at all.

[Question] We agree, Lt Gen Talas, that the Arab homeland is badly fragmented. In fact, it may be said that the Arabs have sunk to a very low level. Do you believe that a military clash between Syria and the Zionist enemy can revive Arab solidarity and bring it back to what it was during the glorious Ramadan [October 1973] War?

[Answer] Arab solidarity will become a fact in case of any military clash. I do not doubt that for a moment. The heroic acts and glorious deeds and sacrifices of the Lebanese will be an incentive to unite the Arab nation and restore its grandeur.

[Question] There are numerous signs indicating that there is an upcoming settlement in the region. Will Syria's Steadfastness and Opposition Front confront these settlement schemes as it did in the past, or is there another method for confronting these schemes?

[Answer] The Steadfastness and Opposition Front exists, and it is doing its part against capitulatory settlement schemes. The battles this front is fighting against the proponents of a capitulatory course assume different forms, and these depend on the accelerated steps that are taken by other parties against the front. The methods that the Steadfastness and Opposition Front could resort to in the future will be drawn from the movement of the Arab masses who reject capitulatory solutions. These masses have declared their displeasure with those who gamble with their destiny and their future. I do not think that with these masses we will lack the means and methods by which we can bring down any regime in the Arab region that will accept capitulatory settlements.

[Question] But we know very well that the United States will not permit any other political or military defeat in the region.

[Answer] We understand completely that the United States is opposed to Arab rights. We understand that all U.S. presidents have been against the Palestinian Arab people. America has tended to view the Palestinian Arab people as though they were a herd of animals. How can we justify America's conduct as it viewed with relief the massacre of the Lebanese and Palestinian resistance in 1982?

America wants the Arab nation to live in the Arab homeland like the Red Indians have been living in America, and it wants Israel to remain master in the region. Of course that American logic is rejected. We will not kneel, and we will not become Red Indians in our country.

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CSO: 4404/326

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

CZECH OFFICIAL ON DIPLOMATIC TIES

Dubayy KHALEEJ TIMES in English 7 May 85 p 3

[Text]

"CZECHOSLOVAKIA's exports to the UAE have been steadily rising in recent years and we are interested in increasing trade through various promotional means," a top Czech official said in Abu Dhabi yesterday.

"In 1984 Czechoslovakia exported goods worth \$62 million to the UAE. It is a good performance compared to the size of our country," Stanislav David, secretary-general of the Czech Foreign Trade Publicity Organisation (RAPID), said during an interview with Khaleej Times.

He is visiting the UAE now in connection with a trade fair planned by his government, in Abu Dhabi later this year.

Czechoslovakia has full-fledged diplomatic, economic, social and cultural relations with most Arab countries and Mr David hoped that there would be full diplomatic ties with the UAE also in the near future, to complement its existing economic and socio-cultural ties with this country.

Czech exports to the UAE mainly consist of steel, machinery and equipment, jewellery, textiles, glass, crystals and chandeliers. The total Czech exports to the Arab world as a whole in 1984 were of about \$1 billion.

Mr David, an engineer by profession, pointed out that direct flights were available between the UAE and his country, and that there was already a substantial tourist traffic from the UAE to Czechoslovakia. "The Gulf citizens in general prefer the hot water spas in the central part of our country and they are coming there in large numbers, with their families, for treatment and relaxation," Mr David added.

There have been successful exhibitions in the UAE by Czechoslovakia in the past, he said. One was in Sharjah in 1980 and the other in Dubai in 1982.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

DEVELOPMENT IN FUJEIRAH DISCUSSED

Dubayy KHALEEJ TIMES in English 15 Apr 85 p 6

[Editorial]

[Text]

Fujeirah is the UAE's eastern option, indeed the Arab Gulf's window on the Indian Ocean; but it is also a natural centre of agricultural and industrial development in its own right, as a feature story in our paper yesterday showed. It is the only emirate in the Federation that is wholly located on the Gulf of Oman and gives the UAE an exit to world markets that bypasses the vulnerable Straits of Hormuz. This strategic location provides the emirate with probably its most important long-term advantage which should not be seen merely in the context of the current Iraq-Iran war. The growth of Fujeirah should rather be viewed as part of an effort to spread out development and diversify the Federation's economic base and commercial outlets to provide greater security to the country.

Only a few years ago, Fujeirah was cut off from the rest of the country by a wall of deserts and mountains that could be crossed only by a four-wheeler—apart, of course, from the camel. With the building of modern roads, the east has been brought closer to the major urban centres on the Gulf coast. Projects now being implemented or on the drawing board will bring the whole of the UAE and the rest of the Arab Gulf closer to the shipping lanes of the world. One major project is the development of the port as a major trans-shipment point for the Arabian Gulf, Pakistan and India. This Dh265-million project seeks to capitalise on Fujeirah's strategic location to overcome the dangers and high insurance costs of shipping in the Gulf and congestion in some ports in the South Asian subcontinent. In the long-term, plans are for a free trade area to develop industrially, helped by the AGCC's customs union to establish processing factories for the Gulf market. Another project with an AGCC dimension is the plan to establish a strategic food reserve in the emirate to ensure food security for the whole Gulf. But perhaps the most exciting development was Adnoc's decision last year to build a 360-km pipeline from Abu Dhabi's Habshan oilfield, capable of transporting half a million barrels of crude a day, to the shores of the Indian Ocean. It is not clear whether there will be spinoffs in the form of a refinery and other downstream industries, although the municipality has reserved an area near the port for such a purpose.

Nevertheless, Fujeirah is not relying merely on its geographical position to secure its economic future, but is seeking to exploit

its agricultural and mineral resources as well. Fishing has been an important traditional income from the Indian Ocean, and it can be modernised without depriving the large class of local fishermen of their means of livelihood. The area is also suited for agricultural development—the emirate has the largest number of date palms in the country—and a huge poultry farm has been established capable of meeting a sixth of the UAE's requirements of eggs and broiler chicken. Fujairah's industrial strategy is to make the greatest possible use of local raw materials, and a series of rock-based industries have been established to produce cement, clinker, crushed gabbro, rockwool for insulation purposes, glass and ceramics. These developments may be capped by the discovery of hydrocarbons whose existence was proved by a seismic survey late last year. The fact that this discovery has been made only recently has had the effect of delaying Fujairah's development, but it has also permitted the exploitation of the emirate's other resources to provide a more broad-based economic foundation. If oil is found, it should not be allowed to overshadow Fujairah's other achievements.

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UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

MORE BANK MERGERS LIKELY

Dubayy KHALEEJ TIMES in English 3 May 85 p 11

[Text]

THE Governor of the UAE Central Bank has said the recent merger of three Abu Dhabi commercial banks would be followed by others, probably this year, to consolidate the banking sector and form stronger banks.

Abdul Malik Al Hamar told Reuters in Abu Dhabi yesterday that the idea of mergers was gaining momentum in the banking community. "It is highly probable that two or more mergers may take place before the end of this year," he said.

There have been three bank mergers this year, the most recent being the merger of three banks—Khalij Commercial, Emirates Commercial and Federal Commercial—to form the Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank.

Mr Hamar said the merger "will create a strong bank in Abu Dhabi, with a new board of directors, including well experienced bankers, and new funds. We hope it will play a very effective role."

Banking sources said the government of Abu Dhabi, probably through the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority, would inject some Dh1.2 billion into the new bank's capital and reserves to provide for bad loans outstanding with the three merging banks.

"We expect further cooperation with the local government in terms of securing commercial business for the new bank," Hamar added.

He said although the Central Bank had been studying the merger for some time, "the banks themselves took the initiative."

Mr Hamar said UAE banks generally improved their positions last year, and made large new provisions for bad and doubtful loans, which the Central Bank required them to declare for the first time.

Such provisions jumped to Dh5.57 billion from Dh3.73 billion in 1983, and formed 13.7 per cent of all loans and advances at end-1984, Mr Hamar said. "Very few banking systems in the world, if any, have similarly high ratios."

He said total assets of commercial banks increased 14.9 per cent last year to Dh91.6 billion and net foreign assets more than doubled to Dh23.6 billion.

Asked about the proposed establishment of a UAE stock market, Mr Hamar said, "We are awaiting the implementation of the commercial companies law which is supposed to start on July 1. Once this is properly applied, steps could be taken to establish a stock market."

Our staff reporter adds: The Presidential decree setting up the new bank has been finalised and will be issued early next week, possibly on Saturday, according to banking sources in Abu Dhabi.

The decree is likely to stipulate that the bank should come into being on July 1, the sources added.

Until then, the three merging banks will continue to function as at present.

The sources denied there was any move to put the management of the new bank, or of the three banks during the transition period, under Khalij Commercial.

This was only one of the proposals considered in the merger process but was dropped later because the KCB itself is managed by another bank, the sources said.

CSO: 4400/144

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

PLANNING ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Dubayy KHALEEJ TIMES in English 7 May 85 p 6

[Text]

THE country's economy has been going through a rather rough patch since 1981, and the statement by the Governor of the UAE Central Bank, Abdul Malik Al Hamar, in an interview with an Arabic contemporary, that the economic performance last year was "stable" and was likely to remain so this year is therefore very reassuring. The GDP had declined by a quarter between 1981 and 1984 as a result of the sluggish oil market. But it appears that the recession has bottomed out, and a slow economic recovery is on the cards. One indication of this may be an improvement in the balance of payments surplus which rose from Dh5.5 billion in 1983 to Dh6.3 billion last year, although this was partly due to the 1980 decision linking the dirham to the strong dollar. This has increased the purchasing power of the dirham over the past two years, reducing the import costs and preventing an increase in the prices of domestic goods and services.

While we should be grateful for the fortunate consequence of the 1980 decision, the country's economic recovery requires long-term planning. The fact is that the strong dollar and high interest rates abroad have also had the effect of draining a large part of the surplus from the national economy in the absence of adequate investment opportunities within the country. Net foreign assets rose from \$2.8 billion at the end of 1983 to \$5.7 billion last year. While the country's annual income from investments overseas is sufficient to provide each national with \$4,000, such rentierism is hardly a substitute for genuine development. An expert in the Ministry of Economy and Commerce had recently suggested that the main cause for the recession was the absence of development planning, and Mr Abdul Malik Al Hamar has now emphasised the need for a comprehensive development plan. The time is opportune. The recession has provided a useful incentive for a large-scale overhauling of the system and trimming of unnecessary fat. We can begin to consolidate the more streamlined economy and allow it to grow more rationally when the upturn begins. In the meantime the long-delayed report of the joint committee set up by the FNC and the Council of Ministers is being eagerly awaited, and we hope that it will provide an opportunity for a broad-based discussion in the country and useful ideas for a comprehensive development plan.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

TRAINING PROGRAM FOR IRANIAN WORKERS

Dubayy KHALEEL TIMES in English 3 May 85 p 3

[Text]

A FREE training programme will be made available for unskilled Iranian workers in the UAE to enable them to improve their employment prospects, Bagher Sakhai, Iranian Consul-General, announced in Dubai yesterday.

The programme, worked out by the Iranian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, had been discussed with the UAE Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Khalfan Al Roumi, and would be started within a month at the new Iranian stadium near the Sudanese Club. The training would enable a worker to become a motor or airconditioning mechanic or get skill in some technical trade.

Thanking the UAE ministry and the local authorities for cooperation, Mr Bagher Sakhai hoped that the skilled Iranian workforce would serve this country in a better way.

There are more than 100,000 Iranian workers, about 40,000 with families, working in the UAE for a long time.

The Iranian government had also worked out an insurance scheme which would be beneficial for the workers, specially the aged.

The consul-general said the stadium, built on a 50,000 square metre area with facilities for indoor and outdoor games, aimed at providing the Iranians with recreational facilities. The stadium also includes a hall and a guest house.

The Iranian government has appointed a new labour attache, Godar Kareemi, to look after the interest of workers.

CSO: 4400/144

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

CUTTING DOWN ON OSTENTATION

Dubayy KHALEEJ TIMES in English 4 May 85 p 6

[Editorial]

[Text]

MANY people have been concerned for a long time with the issue of marriage expenses and the question of high rates of dowry. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has been studying the problem and it has been debated a number of times by the Abu Dhabi National Consultative Council. The Council has now recommended, after a debate last week, that a ceiling of Dh80,000 be fixed for marriage expenses, and wedding celebrations should not last beyond two days. The main reason underlying the concern with the cost of marriage was again brought out during the NCC debate: that the present high level of expenses is forcing many nationals to marry foreign wives, with all the consequent social repercussions. The NCC recommendation does not specify whether the ceiling includes dowry, which has been an even greater cause for disquiet. The NCC itself as far back as 1980 had recommended that a maximum limit for dowries should be fixed so that nationals did not at least have any economic compulsion to marry abroad. Since then, several other proposals have also been discussed in this context, including a hefty fee for getting permission to marry a foreign wife and, on the other hand, grants for national men marrying national women.

Supporters of such proposals refer to the growing rate of divorce in the country which reportedly rose by 10 per cent in 1983 as compared to the previous year. Some 211 of the 265 marriages annulled in Dubai in 1983 involved mixed marriages and in 150 of these, the husbands concerned were nationals. Most of the nationals marrying foreign wives—72 per cent, according to one report—hold small-income jobs and 60 per cent of them are of limited education: also many of those who marry young foreign women are aged people.

The fact that despite all this concern over the marriage trends, no cut-and-dried solutions have been found shows only how complex the issue is and indeed that there may be no simple solutions. As one member pointed out during the NCC debate, social problems like this can not be solved through legal restrictions or official controls. A number of developing countries have tried various methods to limit dowries and marriage expenses and even promulgated laws to restrict the number of guests at wedding feasts and the number of dishes that can be served. Ultimately, however, ways

have been found to circumvent all such regulations by the rich and the influential and those who were supposed to benefit from the regulations have continued to suffer.

This does not mean that the fight to reform customs that have become oppressive should be given up. Even if every citizen can afford to spend Dh80,000 on a wedding feast, it still amounts to wasteful expenditure and a display of ostentation that goes badly with our traditions. Legal measures do also help, to the extent that they provide protection to those who cannot or do not want to spend extravagantly on dowries and feasts: they will certainly help many conscious young men and women who want to resist the tide towards materialism. But ultimately it is only through sustained education campaigns that a movement for social reform can be built up and made to have its impact felt. In the NCC debate, it was recognised that the success of any scheme relating to marriage expenses or preventing bride-hunting abroad would depend largely on voluntary cooperation and that the tribes had an important role to play in this. If high expenses on inter-tribe marriages and marriages within a tribe were avoided, one member pointed out, national society would benefit. Radio and television could play a more positive part than they have done so far, and plays and films built around the theme of high dowry demands should have an obvious educative value. Folk troupes could also be utilised to spread the message of simplicity and austerity among the people. Above all, the process of reformation depends on the example set by those who occupy positions of influence in their tribe, region or locality, like the members of the FNC and the NCC and the pioneers who were honoured during the recent Gulf Social Work Week: they should lead a campaign for social emancipation.

CSO: 4400/144

10 June 1985

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

BRIEFS

SEAT ON SECURITY COUNCIL--Following the meeting of the Council of Arab Foreign Ministers in Tunis, it was decided to nominate the UAE as a candidate to fill the sole Arab seat on the UN Security Council, which will become vacant at the end of this year. It should be remembered that Arab candidates for the Security Council are chosen on a rotating basis between Asian and African Arab states. AL-TADAMUN has learned that several other states were nominated to fill the seat, in particular the PDRY, which was next in line were the selection to be made on a rotating basis. But the nomination of Oman instead of the PDRY, in addition to the nomination of Iraq and Syria, led to the Arab choice falling on the UAE as a compromise candidate. It is expected that the UAE will play a major role since it represents an acceptable Gulf voice to most sides, particularly with regard to the Iran-Iraq war. [Text] [London AL-TADAMUN in Arabic 27 Apr-3 May 85 p 6]

NEW ECONOMIC INDICATORS IN ABU DHABI--Economic trends in Abu Dhabi indicate greater moderation in foreign aid and national bank mergers, according to statements made recently by the chief of the Finance Department of Abu Dhabi, Muhammad al-Habrush. Mr al-Habrush denied that the intention was to impose restrictions on economic activities at present. He stated that the proposed solution is to curtail expenditures as a way of reducing the deficit. He added that foreign aid represents a burden on the budgets of the GCC countries, and there is general agreement to cut foreign aid so that it will not create burdens on the GCC states and will not lead to over-spending. As for bank mergers in the emirate, he said that mergers mean an easing of the banks' administrative and managerial costs, and thus instead of dealing with many problems it will be possible to deal with them as one problem. [Text] [London AL-TADAMUN in Arabic 27 Apr-3 May 85 p 34]

CSO: 4404/328

AFGHANISTAN

MORE LOYA JIRGAH REPRESENTATIVES GIVE VIEWS

Kabul KABUL NEW TIMES in English 20 Apr 85 pp 1-2

[Text]

Our country is at the threshold of a great historical event. That is the convocation of the Loya Jirgah (grand assembly) of the representatives of the peoples from all over the country.

The decision to convene it has been enthusiastically welcomed by all Afghan people. The working people elected their representatives to the Loya Jirgah in a democratic and free atmosphere.

Following are the views of some of the elected representatives of the people to the Loya Jirgah, who were interviewed by KNT correspondents.

"The elected representatives of the people through this great historical Loya Jirgah would chart out decisive measures to annihilate the enemies of our dear country and to rebuff the aggressions from without. The counterrevolution has subjected our people to great hardships and miseries. They have burnt quite a number of mosques, schools, hospitals, and other public utility institutes. Therefore the convening of the Loya Jirgah would be

a like a firm fist against the enemies of our country and revolution".

This was stated by Shair Ali, a peasant of the Rostaq district of Takhar province. He used to be the President of the Buzkashi team of the district. He was as well an elected representative to the tenth and eleventh convocations of the past Wolasi Jirgahs. (peoples assembly). He has been elected as a representative of the district to the Loya Jirgah.

In response to a question he said: "Alongwith some other representatives of the district, I have been elected to participate in the Loya Jirgah. The Loya Jirgah being a popular and historical tradition of our people shall discuss all the matters regarding the undeclared war and imperialist interferences in the internal affairs of our country. We will discuss and adopt concrete measures for doing away with the aggressions and interventions of the American imperialism alongwith its Chinese accomplices and Pakistani and Iranian servants.

In the present difficult conditions through which country passing, the decision of holding Loya Jirgah is very wise, and principled decision of the PDPA and the state of the DRA.

There is no doubt that convening of Jirgahs are the best method of solving the problems and are means of struggling against the enemy of our country and revolution.

"The inhabitants of Farah province on hearing about the convocation of a Loy Jirgah expressed much enthusiasm. The people there elected their representatives in a free and democratic atmosphere. Our people have been greatly affected by the flagrant interventions of the imperialist and reactionary forces. In order to eliminate these interventions they are holding this great historical Jirgah. The above was said by Ghulam Haider Yousufi, President of the Provincial Council of the NFF of Farah province in an interview to a KNT correspondent.

Yousufi added, "the people of Farah province through convening of a tribal Jirgah elected 20 of their best representatives, for Loya Jirgah.

The representatives include peasants, workers, artisans, religious leaders and intellectuals. At the end

Yousufi added, "these representatives unlike in the past are the genuine representatives of the people and have been elected in a free and democratic atmosphere.

Ghulam Ahmed, elected representative of Farah province said: "In the past too, I used to be a representative of the people of my province to the then peoples Jirgahs. I could observe how the then regimes used to subjugate the people. They paid no attention to the views and advices of the elders and tribal representatives.

Those regimes were hypocritical. But now every thing has been reversed, the revolutionary government pays great attention to the traditions and customs of the people, the best example of which now is the convening of the present Loya Jirgah. Every body knows that fratricide is of no use to anybody and it is through such Jirgahs that one can seek effective ways to stop it.

One should think that had the Soviet forces not been there to assist us materially and morally, what results would the imperialist conspiracies have resulted in. Now the Loya Jirgah is precisely to discuss and find solution to such issues.

AFGHANISTAN

ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES EXPRESS VIEWS

Kabul KABUL NEW TIMES in English 23 Apr 85 p 2

[Text]

"We want our people to get united with a single will and common views and bring about countrywide peace through convening this historic Loya Jirgah (grand assembly).

This was stated by Mohammad Hassan, one of the representatives of Waras District of Bamyan Province to Loya Jirgah, granting an interview to Kabul New Times correspondent.

It is evident to me and all my countrymen, he continued, that the counter-revolution in collusion with all their allies and supporters have not been able to take even a single step forward for realization of their futile dreams in the course of over six years after the April Revolution. The only thing they have brought about is destruction, fratricide and hundreds of other miseries.

Our people are now well aware of this fact and rally around the People's Dem-

ocratic Party of Afghanistan and in a single voice respond to the call of their revolutionary state. They struggle against the enemy. After getting informed of the decree of the Revolutionary Council of the DRA on the convocation of Loya Jirgah, the people of Behsood district elected and sent their representatives to Kabul. The people's representatives through this Loya Jirgah would seek ways for prosperity and tranquillity of all people and would restore peace and brotherhood in the country.

Qurban Ali, a peasant, a representative of Helmand village of Behsood District, Wardak province, to Loya Jirgah, expressed his view on Loya Jirgah as follows:

"Loya Jirgah is one of the best historic heritages and sacred traditions, of the inhabitants of our revolutionary country. Whenever, our forefathers, he

added, were faced with some problems they gathered together in Loya Jirgahs in order to solve them. As their representatives they elected tribal elders and respected people. Following these traditions, today our party and revolutionary state, too, have decided to convene a grand historic Jirgah participated by people's representatives from the remotest villages and localities of the country. The Loya Jirgah which is to be held in Kabul will discuss the problems of the Afghan working people and find ways to solve them.

Haji Rojdar, one of the livestock breeders in Char-dara District of Kunduz Province who has spent most of his life in rearing cattle now is in the ranks of defenders of revolution. Talking of the warm welcome of the people of his district to convening Loya

Jirgah he said: The peasants and livestock breeders of Chardara district hearing the news on convening Loya Jirgah expressed their great joy and thanked God that their revolutionary state had called for their representatives to the capital of the revolutionary Afghanistan to participate in Loya Jirgah and discuss with them all the concerned issues as well as to do away with the miseries that the undeclared war of imperialism and reaction have imposed on them.

After electing their representatives in the centre and districts of Kunduz Province, he added, people organised a grand meeting in the central square of Kunduz city where they showered flowers on their representatives. Seeing their representatives off they chanted such slogans as "We all defend our revolution", "We hope for the success of the historic and

grand jirgah of the country".

Azizur Rahman Safi, a judge in the civil rights office of Parwan Province who has been elected as representative of Bagrami District to Loya Jirgah said:

"The Bagrami district located to the north of Kabul has 30 thousand population. Such nationalities as Pashtuns, Tajiks, Uzbeks, Turkmen and Hindus live there. Hearing the news on the convocation of Loya Jirgah, the inhabitants of the district immediately held a gathering and elected their representatives.

Talking of the importance of this historic Loya Jirgah Safi said, "The resolutions of this Loya Jirgah will help to stop fratricide in our country, and to cut short the evil doings of imperialists aggressors from our sacred homeland. It will consolidate our friendship with the progressive mankind, particularly the Soviet Union. It will ensure peace, and will pave the ground for socio-economic advancements in the country.

To solve the existing problems, our popular state declared the convening of the Loya Jirgah so that our people could find the opportunity to gather together, talk about the restoration of peace and tranquillity and seek ways and means for averting disputes as well as for putting an end to the penetration of the aliens taking place through the imperialist countries especially United States, China, Pakistan and Iran.

AFGHANISTAN

KARMAL LEADS MARCH TO HONOR LOYA JIRGAH

Kabul KABUL NEW TIMES in English 21 Apr 85 pp 1-2

[Text] Kabul, (BIA)--Over 300,000 citizens of Kabul participated in a mammoth march and a meeting yesterday to welcome the convening of the Loya Jirgah of the elected representatives of the Afghan people.

Babrak Karmal, the national leader of the Afghan people, hand in hand with the elders and representatives of the people was in the van of the marchers.

Accompanied by the members of the Politburo and the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the PDPA, Babrak Karmal attended at 12 noon yesterday a grand meeting of working people of Kabul city, convened in front of the headquarters of the CC of the PDPA. Speaking at the meeting Babrak Karmal congratulated the awakened working people of Afghanistan on the forthcoming convocation of the Loya Jirgah of the representatives of the heroic and free-born Afghan people.

On his way from the headquarters of the Revolutionary Council to the rostrum, Babrak Karmal was enthusiastically welcomed by the elected representatives to the Loya Jirgah and the people with prolonged clappings and floral wreaths. The Afghan leader exchanged greetings with elders, elected representatives and people.

The President of the Revolutionary Council said in his speech: "Freeborn and brave Afghan compatriots, elected representatives to the Loya Jirgah, i.e., the grand assembly of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, comrades and friends!

Let me congratulate, on behalf of the Central Committee of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, the Revolutionary Council of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, the government of the DRA and myself, you, the respected elected representatives of the brave people of Afghanistan. These greetings are the patriotic, revolutionary felicitations inspired by the eternal memory of the devoted martyrs of the April Revolution. These are the felicitations which are a homage to the departed souls of our brave martyred ancestors. Martyred fathers and forefathers. You have heard a lot these days about the Loya Jirgah (grand assembly of the Afghan people). The principle of the Loya Jirgah has firm roots in the history of Afghanistan. It emanates from the

course of life, national history and the will of the Afghan people.

The Loya Jirgah has always been the manifestation of the will of the Afghan people. This is why our people have said correctly that ours is a country of Jirgahs.

Perhaps a question would arise in the minds of some of our compatriots that the Loya-Jirgah was convened time and again by kings, nobles and oppressive influential individuals of Afghanistan. Such a way of thinking would be a big mistake committed against the will of the people of Afghanistan. On the contrary, in the course of the history the Loya Jirgah, or the grand assembly of free people of Afghanistan originated from the will of the Afghan people themselves. The Loya Jirgahs were characterized by their imposing the will of people on kings and lords.

For the first time in the whole course of Afghan people's national history a Loya Jirgah is being held by the people on the basis of traditions, in a democratic manner and with a new content, a new and progressive style as the first real Jirgah of the people of Afghanistan, under the leadership of their political vanguard.

The people will manifest their will in the new Loya Jirgah the elections to which have been completed.

Let the enemies of Afghans--the American imperialism, Chinese hegemonism, the oppressive military regime of Zia-ul-Haq in Pakistan and all their reactionary allies in the world and the tyrannical reactionary and oppressive rulers of Iran feel shivers down their spine because Afghanistan and the Afghan people have now willed and decided to bring down upon them the iron fist of Afghans embodied in the Loya Jirgah.

Let the earth slide from beneath the feet of the enemies of the revolutionary, heroic, free and independent Afghanistan, let the enemies of the revolution burn in anger and find their way to their eternal grave.

We hold in esteem the sentiments, zeal and fervour, of the elected representatives of the free-born people of Afghanistan, who have gathered for the Loya Jirgah to adopt great, decisive and ultimate decisions against the enemies of the independence and freedom of Afghanistan and against the counter-revolution. These representatives have shown that they are the worthy sons of their fathers.

Since its foundation the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan has been committed to fight people and ensuring real freedom of the Afghan people, for the consolidation and ensuring of genuine national, political and economic independence of Afghans for ensuring peace and security in the country, the region and the world over, and for ensuring real democracy, and greatness and glory of Afghanistan. The party has pledged to spare no sacrifice and to fear no enemy however powerful he might be, and to heroically fight against the enemy.

This is a correct, scientific and historical principle, which has been accepted as a governing principle valid internationally in the context of the destiny of all world nations. When a revolution takes place under the leadership of a vanguard party or a national liberation front establishes the people's power, puts an end to the rule of tyrants, aggressors, oppressors and plunderers, and takes over the state power in the name of the people for serving the people, the state so established is in fact a legal one. It is because it is based on the will of the people and the masses. This reality which had manifested itself time and again in the ancient history of the country found reflection in the world again when the April Revolution triumphed. At that time, all the people of Afghanistan fully supported the April Revolution and the people's power.

Sometime ago one of the journalists in the pay roll of imperialism asked me as to who had elected your state, the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan?

I said that like the lawfulness of other revolutions, the power of working people of Afghanistan was manifested in the state of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan under the leadership of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan and in the April Revolution which was supported by the people, and with the victory of the revolution, the state of the DRA acquired its legality.

The world press and world public opinion and the life of the Afghan people itself are the testimony to and indicative of this established fact that the April Revolution was officially recognized not only by the overwhelming majority of the Afghan people with the exception of a handful oppressors, exploiters, and royalist feudal lords, but by all those countries which today continue the dirty undeclared war against Afghanistan. Please remember that their ambassadors in Kabul come to the authorities of Afghanistan and officially recognised the people's power, the state of Democratic Republic of Afghanistan.

Today the flag of Afghanistan is being the flag of a democratic free and independent republican state is fluttering in the premises of the United Nations Organisation and at all reputable international organisations.

Sisters and brothers!

I have emphasized many a time on the progressive characteristics of the Afghan people. One of the chivalorous, gallant and liberal traits of the Afghan people is that they are loyal and honest with their friend and irreconcilable with the enemy of their honour, dignity, soil and freedom.

The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan and the state of the DRA, i.e. the Revolutionary Council and the government of the DRA distinguish their friend and foe in the international arena only on the basis of the will and decision of the people of Afghanistan. It is people themselves who determine as to who is their friend and who is their enemy.

In the course of the history the Afghan people have realised with their own experience that their friends are the Soviet Union and the countries friendly

to the Soviet Union, and that all progressive forces, great Moslem masses of the world, all peoples of Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the world over are their friends.

The enemies of the working people of Afghanistan are the reactionary, oppressive, exploiting ruling circles attached to imperialism international reaction, and hegemonism. The identification of the friends and foe is based on the deep perception of people themselves and our party and state materialize the will of the people.

Despite the undeclared war, this is the task of the Afghan people and that of the Loya Jirgah or the grand assembly of Afghanistan to adopt the decision on the destiny of their country and people. There will be no pressures in this regard. I will allow no one to exert pressure on this elected Loya Jirgah of the Afghan people. The party and the state pledge to spare no devotion and sacrifice in implementing every decision adopted by the elected Loya Jirgah of the Afghan people.

The Loya Jirgah or the grand assembly of Afghanistan will adopt decision for ensuring peace and security, will respond to the issues related to the undeclared war against the revolutionary Afghanistan. As we have pledged to consolidate the national independence, this grand Loya Jirgah of the Afghan people will take decisions in that regard as well.

Our grand Loya Jirgah will adopt decision on the domestic and foreign policy and consolidation of the national independence of Afghanistan.

The people of Afghanistan have correctly identified that the Soviet Union, being an honest friend has spared no friendly and disinterested assistance to the people of Afghanistan in the course of history. Yet, it were the British colonialists who had a treacherous eye on the Afghan people. And, now the US imperialism, which has made the military regime of Pakistan, and the reaction of the region its tool, has extended its filthy and treacherous hand towards Afghanistan.

We have pledged that the state should be created by people themselves, that the real representatives of people take part in state affairs, and that genuine democracy be strengthened with the participation of the people in the state administration.

We promise in this grand gathering once again that we would fight for building a developed, free, blossoming and prideful Afghanistan whose flag and standard will always flutter in the world. We are confident that the Loya Jirgah or the grand assembly of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan will adopt a decision to the effect that the armed counter-revolution exported from Pakistan and Iran must be annihilated and peace and tranquillity must be further strengthened throughout our free and revolutionary homeland.

Cherishing these aspirations the people of Afghanistan will adopt decisions in this Loya Jirgah in an Afghan-like revolutionary and progressive manner. And all the Afghan people with the PDPA in their van will forge ahead against the enemies of the revolution.

Forward towards the complete annihilation of the counter-revolution! Forward with iron fist and will!

The speech of Babrak Karmal was interrupted from time to time by enthusiastic and prolonged applauses of the audience. They chanted slogans like: "Long live our sacred soil Afghanistan!", "Long live peace! 'Afghanistan is a country of jirgahs!'", and so on.

At the end of the meeting, Babrak Karmal, members of the Politburo and Secretariat of the PDPA CC; members of the Revolutionary Council and the Council of Ministers of the DRA, elected representatives of the people to the Loya Jirgah along with hundreds of thousands of working people of Kabul city marched from the headquarters of the PDPA CC to the 'Zarnigar Park'.

This park was the venue of many a meeting of the working people in pre-revolutionary times. Many of these were addressed by Babrak Karmal.

CSO: 4600/450

AFGHANISTAN

LOYA JIRGAHS 'MANIFESTATION OF PEOPLE'S WILL'

Kabul KABUL NEW TIMES in English 22 Apr 85 p 2

[Article by G. A. Eqbal]

[Text]

The tradition of seeking counsels of elders for achieving a national consensus on pivotal issues is a popular tradition of the Afghan people reflected in Loya Jirgahs, (grand assemblies), throughout the history of Afghanistan.

Loya Jirgahs so far held are regarded as milestones in the socio-political life of the Afghan society, because they have been a symbol of common will as opposed to absolute an arbitrary rule.

Although the exploiter governments of Afghanistan always tried to keep power in the hands of their own class, and even families, but the Afghan masses as being the epoch-making forces of the society, have always rescued the nation in very critical and dangerous moments, by taking joint decisions and carrying out them resolutely.

From socio-political point of view Loya Jirgah is the greatest assembly of the representatives of broad sections of people. It is mostly held for making jo-

int decisions concerning major socio-political matters such as repulsing aggressions, declaring peace, approval of new constitutions, adoption of major treaties which have impact on the life and destiny of greatest number of the people of Afghanistan.

The principle of representation and joint decision-making is the basic characteristic of Loya Jirgah. In this forum all representatives have an equal say and equal vote in deciding upon national and international affairs of the country.

Jirgahs and Loya Jirgahs, in other words, assemblies and grand assemblies are not a new phenomenon in the life of Afghan people.

Rig Veda, the ancient book of hymns of the early Arians of second and first millennium B.C. also speaks of Sabha and Samity assemblies in which major decisions were adopted concerning village and state affairs and chiefs of tribes, were also elected.

During the reign of Kanishka, 120-160 A.D. i.e., in Kushan Empire, also a

grand assembly was held in Kapisa, the summer capital of Kushanis, located about 70 miles north of Kabul. Kapisa assembly was attended by 500 representatives from among the prominent scholars and social figures coming from Baktarian, Chinese and Indian parts of the Kushan Empire.

The Kapisa grand assembly discussed religious conflicts and adopted comprehensive decisions known as Mahayana (the broad path) against Hynayana (the narrow path) which prevailed previously.

Similar popular and massive oaths were made by our patriotic people when the Amavidd and Abassid invasions in 7th, 8th and 9th centuries A.D. which were characterised by 12 popular uprisings, and consequently the liberation of Khorasan (the Land of Sunrise). It was the name that Arabs gave to Afghanistan during the middle ages.

During the 10th century, two grand assemblies were held in Afghanistan. Major results of these grand assemblies were manifested in

the uprising of Kandahar led by Mir Wais Hotaky in 1707 which ended the domination of the Iranian Safawids over the western part of Khorasan. Another grand assembly was held in Kandahar in 1747 which elected Ahmad Shah Abdali as king of Afghanistan whose dynasty reigned up to the middle of the 19th century.

As Afghanistan got closer to the modern era and became acquainted with some new forms and methods of representative democracy, the techniques of holding assemblies, the procedures for electing their members, the dimensions of the problems to be discussed and the concrete decisions to be made, gradually assumed some new connotations and perfections.

Thus the last ten grand assemblies held in the 19th and 20th century in Afghanistan, as far as their socio-political potentialities are concerned have been akin to practice of referendums in some other countries on major national issues.

In the 19th century the first grand assembly in Kabul was held during the reign of Amir Sher Ali Khan in which 2000 elected and appointed members participated. The Kabul general assembly of 1865 adopted the following major decisions:

—To put an end to internal discord,

—To ensure domestic security

—Approval of the plans for the modernization of the state.

Representatives of all

nationalities from different parts of the country took part in this grand assembly. The decisions of the assembly were read aloud to a large audience which had gathered in the foothills of Tapai-Maranjan in Kabul.

During the 20th century nine Loya Jirgahs were held which individually reflected the choice and the will of Afghan people as regards non-participation of Afghanistan in World War I and World War II, approval of new constitutions and foreign and domestic policies of the governments of Afghanistan and so forth.

However, the most important grand assembly which had an all-sided effect on the destiny of modern Afghanistan was the Loya Jirgah of 1922 held in Jalalabad, three years after the victory of the war of independence. At this assembly the first Constitutionalists, who three years earlier, led by King Amanullah Khan and enjoying full support of the overwhelming majority of freedom-loving people of Afghanistan had broken the chains of bondage to British colonialism, laid the foundation of a dynamic Afghanistan. At this assembly the first constitution and the socio-political reforms initiated by the Constitutionalists were approved. The most characterising outcome of the 1922 Grand Assembly was the fact that it approved that similar Loya Jirgahs should be held every three years in the country. A progressive feature of the two grand assemblies held in the first decade after independence is that women who were kept away from active participation in the

social, political and economic spheres of the society were granted equal rights and had representation in these assemblies.

Although in opposition to the national patriotic path chosen by Amanullah and the Constitutionals, the conspiracies and interventions of the British imperialism and the subversive activities of the internal reactionaries led by Nadir family caused an internal rebellion and a reactionary dynasty seized the power, the country's independence remained intact. The brutal and repressive measures of Nadir dynasty which lasted till the eve of April Revolution of 1978 could neither extinguish the flames of constitutionalism nor barter away country's independence. Soon the second generation of the constitutionalists emerged and democratic thoughts evolved further.

Due to these social developments, on the one hand and the attempts of the US imperialism who sought to draw Afghanistan into its military-political orbit in 1950s the Royal Government of Afghanistan called the Loya Jirgah in 1955. The Jirgah decided to:

—Support the call of the Pashtunistan people who demanded self-determination for themselves.

—Strengthen the Afghan

army and providing them with sufficient arm for national defence.

—Endorse the resolution No 72 of the Wolosi Jirgah (National Council) which rejected and condemned the annexation of Pashtunistan territory by Pakistan.

Reviewing the aforementioned historical course of popular representation in grand assemblies it needs to be concluded:

—Loya Jirgah is a typical and original form of representative democracy in Afghanistan.

—Loya Jirgah is the supreme representative body in which the state and the people take joint decisions concerning national and international affairs of the country.

During the 18th-19th and 20th centuries 12 Loya Jirgah have been recorded in Afghan history.

Realising the class nature of the DRA state and the representatives of the forthcoming Loya Jirgah, it is clear that this assembly would have a new and progressive substance.

It is because the revolutionary state of the DRA is the representative of popular rule in the country not of the exploiting class, and secondly the elected representatives come from among the broad masses of people and not from among the feudal lords and elite.

BANGLADESH

PAPERS REPORT ON USSR-BANGLADESH BARTER PROTOCOL

Commodities Specified

Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English 29 Apr 85 p 8

[Text]

The 14th barter trade protocol between Bangladesh and the Soviet Union was signed in Dhaka yesterday envisaging an exchange of commodities worth 60 million pounds two-way during the current year, reports BSS.

The size of the new barter is four million pounds more than the last year's barter.

According to the protocol, Bangladesh will also export to the USSR commodities worth 6.4 million pounds during 1985, under credit repayment programme.

The agreement was concluded after a week-long negotiation between Bangladesh officials and a three-member Soviet trade delegation, which came from Moscow. The Soviet delegation also included officials of the local USSR Trade mission.

Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Mr. S. Hassan Ahmed, and the Soviet Ambassador in Bangladesh, Mr. Vladimir G. Beliaev, signed the protocol on behalf of their respective country.

Originally the Soviet delegation was supposed to be led by the Deputy Foreign Trade Minister, Mr. I.T. Grishin, but his sudden illness prevented him from coming to Dhaka.

Under the protocol, the principal items that Bangladesh

will export to Soviet Union include jute cloth, jute bags, jute carpets, raw jute, goat skins, crust and finished leather, tea, tobacco, cigarettes, readymade garments, handicraft, books and periodicals, cinematographic films, jute yarn and twine, wires and cables, super enamelled copper wire, coir fibre, soap, tooth paste, cosmetics, sanitary ware, stainless steel cutlaries, locks and pad locks, razor blade, jam and jelly, juices, packet tea, hosiery products and specialised textiles.

The items that Bangladesh will import from Soviet Union under the protocol include; machinery, equipment and spare parts, tractors and trailers, workshop machinery and equipment tools and machine tools, steel rolls, pig iron, M S billets, cotton, high-speed diesel oil, cement, zinc ingot, sheet and plate glass over four MM thickness, books and periodicals and cinematographic films.

The trade between Bangladesh and the USSR takes place under a general trade agreement signed by the two countries in March 1972. The agreement provided for trade in convertible currencies as well as barter exchanges and over the years barter exchanges emerged as the dominant form of trade between the two countries.

Past Trading Reviewed

Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English 26 Apr 85 pp 1, 8

[Text]

A three-member Soviet trade delegation arrived in Dhaka Wednesday to negotiate and

sign the 14th barter trade protocol with Bangladesh, reports BSS.

The delegation is led by Deputy Chief of the Department for Trade with Asian Countries of the Ministry of Foreign Trade of the U.S.S.R. Mr. G.P. Semenilkov.

The Deputy Foreign Trade Minister, Mr. I.T. Grishin, was originally supposed to lead the trade team but his sudden illness prevented him from coming to Dhaka.

The trade protocol is expected to be concluded on April 28 and will be initiated by the Soviet Ambassador in Bangladesh and the Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce.

An official source indicated here yesterday that size of the 14th barter would be little over than that of the last year's. The size of the last year's barter was 69 million dollars two-way.

The trade relations between the USSR and Bangladesh are based on the trade agreement signed between the two countries in March, 1972 as well as annual trade protocols.

Over the period of 12 years the volume of mutual trade has increased significantly and amounted to 69 million dollars in 1984 comparing to only 23 million dollars in 1972.

A good deal of mutual trade is being done on a clearing (barter) basis which enables both the countries to exchange required goods without freely

convertible currency.

The USSR is one of the leading buyers of traditional items of Bangladesh exportables like raw jute, jute products, leather goods, loose tea, tobacco, handicrafts and jute carpets. All these items are purchased both against annual barter protocols and in repayment of various Soviet state and commercial credits granted to Bangladesh.

For the period 1972-1984 the USSR has imported from Bangladesh about 320 thousand tons of raw jute, 290 million metre of jute cloth, 150 million pieces of jute bags, 20 thousand tons of loose tea, 17 thousand pieces of goat skins and 160 thousand square metres of jute carpet.

In turn, Bangladesh imported from Soviet Union machinery and equipment, spare parts petroleum products, steel, pig iron and raw cotton.

During 1977-1983 Soviet Union exported to Bangladesh over 2000 agricultural tractors, about 900 tons of petroleum products, 110 thousand tons of pig iron, 70 tons of M.S. billet and 100 thousand tons of raw cotton.

An official source said that there are still possibilities for further successful development of trade between the two countries in their mutual interest.

BANGLADESH

BANGLADESH, BULGARIA SIGN CULTURAL EXCHANGE PACT

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 26 Apr 85 pp 1, 10

[Text] Bangladesh and Bulgaria on Thursday signed a programme of exchanges in the fields of science and education culture and arts sports and information to further improve the existing cordial relations between them reports BSS.

The biennial executive programme comes under the perview of the cultural co-operation agreement signed between the two countries in 1974 envisaging closer cooperation between the above fields.

According to the provision of the programme the two governments agreed to encourage cooperation and exchange of delegations in the field of science and education. Under the programme Bulgaria will offer five scholarships each year to Bangladeshi while Bangladesh will offer one scholarship to a Bulgarian national.

Quazi Jalaludidin Ahmed, Secretary Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs and Bulgarian Ambassador in Bangladesh Mr A T Papalezov signed the programme on behalf of their respective governments.

Besides scholarships the two governments agreed to exchange cultural delegation musical ensembles and photo exhibition. Under the proirision of the programme both sides agreed to exchange the visits of writers and encourage cooperation for the libraries of the two countries.

The two governments have also agreed to assist the establishment of contracts between their leading sports bodies exchanges of information and materials between the union of journalists and mass media of the two countries.

The Bulgarian Ambassador expressed the hope that the relations between Sofia and Dhaka will develop and improve further in future. Terming culture as a 'bridge' between nations Mr Papalezov said with the implementation of the current programme, the relations between the two countries will be more 'cordial and closer" He informed that about one hundred Bangladeshis are now studying in Bulgaria.

CSO: 4600/1570

BANGLADESH

REPORTAGE IN PROBLEMS IN INDO-BANGLADESH RELATIONS

Border Fencing Plan

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 13 Apr 85 p 1

[Text] NEW DELHI, Apr 12--Indications available in Delhi suggest that the Indian government "has shelved, if not abandoned" the plan to construct the controversial fencing along India's border with Bangladesh an influential Indian daily reported, states BSS.

The English daily Deccan Herald published from Bangalore in a front page report on Wednesday said the constraints that have forced the Government to consign the project to deep freeze appear to be both political and economical.

However, the Deccan Herald noted that the Indian government has not yet abandoned the fencing idea officially, nor is it likely to do so in the immediate future.

The Bangladesh Government protested vigorously against India's declared intention to construct the wire fencing and taken the case to various world fora and complained that it was being "gheraoed" by India causing embarrassment to Delhi.

Besides, the paper said the cost of the project originally estimated to be around rupees 500 crores is now put at three times the original estimate. It referred to allocation of nominal rupees 2.5 crore in 1985-86 budget and said that such a meagre budgetary allocation on a sensitive Rs. 500-crore project to be completed in five years is indicative of the government's apparent intent to relegate the plan to the cupboard until it is finally given up."

According to Deccan Herald "while it is difficult to say what factor had weighted most with the government in relegating the project, Bangladesh's hostility to the project or indefensibility of the plan in the international context as it constitutes placing an artificial barrier between one nation and another or the vertical escalation of the original cost--a sum of all the three--appears to be deterrent enough to going ahead".

New Delhi the paper said, had been particularly embarrassed by Bangladesh's charge that India was adopting a policy of derogation against it by constructing the barbed wire fence. The decision had been unwelcome to the Bangladeshi public.

And some Bangladeshi propagandists had claimed that the fencing amounted to a "Berlin wall" in the sub-continent, while some others had pointed out that the only similar fencing existed in Australia to help sheep farmers protect their cattle from marauding dingo wild dogs.

The Deccan Herald however noted the Indian government has not yet abandoned the fencing idea officially, nor is it likely to do so in the immediate future.

It said fresh thinking in Delhi seems to favour the idea that instead of concentrating on the wire fencing it would be better to erect more watch towers for stricter vigil against illegal infiltration and smuggling

Accordingly 24 watch towers fitted with advanced observation gadgets have already been set up and more such towers are likely to be erected in the near future.

BSS correspondent Shafiqul Karim writes from Calcutta that a Calcutta daily 'Bartaman' put out a similar story on Wednesday.

Indian Water Storage Schemes

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 14 Apr 85 pp 1, 8

[Article by Abdur Rahim]

[Text]

Bangladesh is yet to get a reply from India on her request for a three years extension of the sharing arrangement of the Ganges waters between India and Bangladesh. The memorandum of understanding reached between Indian Prime Minister late Indira Gandhi and Bangladesh President General Ershad on October 7, 1982 allowed sharing of the dry season Ganges waters for two years and that two-year period expired on May 31, last year.

Bangladesh Agriculture Minister wrote letter to India on February 22 1984 much before the date of expiry of the accord. Meanwhile, India has intensified her irrigation and water storage projects in the upper regions of the Ganges which would mean further decrease of Ganges water flow to Bangladesh in the dry season thus affecting three crore people and one third of the area of Bangladesh.

Eight northern districts of Bangladesh are already facing the adverse affect of the withdrawal of the Ganges waters at Farakka, agriculture navigation and other economic activities of those districts are hit very hard as a result.

Bangladesh has been persisting

ly suggesting inclusion of Nepal in the water-sharing talks which has been turned down by India, India opposes any third party involvement in the Ganges water talks although Nepal is the upper riparian of the Ganges. While opposing Nepal's participation in any tripartite Ganges water talks India has started bilateral negotiation with Nepal on feasibility studies for constructing reservoirs in Nepal for storage of water—a proposal to this effect given long before by Bangladesh to both India and Nepal with a view to augmenting water supply to the lower riparian countries in the dry season.

The World Bank has already agreed to fund a feasibility study on the construction of reservoirs (on the Karnali and some other rivers) in Nepal which is an Indo-Nepalese venture. Bangladesh move in this respect goes by default and it failed to get a favourable consideration from the World Bank.

Bangladesh is now left at the mercy of India and the nature for water, overflow of which causes severe floods and non-availability creates drought—both damaging the economic base of Bangladesh besides harming the ecological balance of this country

Indian pressure

India had been pressurising Bangladesh to agree to the construction of a canal through Bangladesh to link Brahmaputra with the Ganges to the advantage of India, which Bangladesh could not agree.

Bangladesh on the other hand proposed storage of monsoon waters in the upper catchment areas of the Ganges basin itself for augmenting dry season Ganges flow.

Bangladesh and India had been sharing the dry season flow of the Ganges available at Farakka under three separate agreements.

The first agreement was of a duration of only 41 days from April 21 to May 31, 1975 meant for a test running of the feeder canal of the Indian barrage across the Ganges at Farakka. Although this agreement gave India right to withdraw 11,000 to 16,000 cusec waters during dry season Ganges flow leaving the rest (44,000 cusec during the driest period) to flow into Bangladesh, it gave India the advantage to formally commission the Farakka barrage in May 1975.

It is interesting to note that a reluctant Bangladeshi expert was sent to witness the funfare of the commissioning of the Farakka barrage, a project described as a death trap for Bangladesh.

Guarantee clause

After a strained relationship between the two countries over the issue which was also taken to the UN by Bangladesh, India signed an agreement for a period of five years on November 5, 1977. A special feature in that agreement was a guarantee clause which entitled Bangladesh to get 80 per cent of water in case the Ganges water availability at Farakka falls below normal limits. The 1977 agreement also indicated that both the countries would approach Nepal for construction of storage dams for augmentation of the Ganges flows. It was considered to be a major breakthrough in the regional cooperation for the water resources development in the Ganges basin.

Following the exchange of proposals of the two governments in 1978, India proposed to augment the dry season flows of the Ganges by diverting one lakh cusec of Brahmaputra waters through a link canal into the Ganges above Farakka. During the long three years deliberations in the Joint River Commission, India refused to associate

Nepal in the Ganges water talks. Nepal was ultimately obliged to cooperate with India in planning of water storage arrangements. This fundamental issue of collaboration of the all the co-riparian states—Nepal, India and Bangladesh—remaining unresolved, and India going ahead at a very fast speed to make more water storage and irrigation schemes in the upper riparian of the Ganges, the water problem for Bangladesh would further be aggravated.

The last agreement on the sharing of the Ganges water between India and Bangladesh was signed in the form of a memorandum of understanding on October 7, 1982 between the late Indian Prime Minister and the Bangladesh President General Ershad. And that period of accord as we have mentioned before expired on May 31. Last year India has turned a deaf ear to all urgings of Bangladesh to renew the accord, without showing any reason.

'Science fiction'

On the other hand the Indian Minister participating in the JRC ministerial level talks held in Dhaka (25th meeting) in July 1983 during an informal discussion with the Bangladesh Minister in front of their aides termed the proposals of both sides for augmentation of the Ganges waters as "science fictions".

The Indian Minister suggested for an honourable burial of the two proposals. Now the question arises whether the issue can be exhumed for further post mortem? and if so how and at what cost?

Even then there was yet another inconclusive 26th meeting of the JRC at the ministerial level in March 1984 where the then Indian Minister for Irrigation reiterated that both the proposals were unacceptable to India. The Indian side for the first time publicly admitted that the Indian scheme of a link canal was not implementable, perhaps due to the opposition of the Bangladesh to accept the Indian proposal. The Indian side also made it clear that the demand of Bangladesh for a long term water sharing arrangement could not be solved by the JRC as it was not competent to undertake such a big decision. Then who might take a decision in this respect and respond to the Bangladeshi quest for her legitimate share in the waters of the international river?

When the bilateral talks fail to achieve its goal what are the alternatives left to Bangladesh? The five-year agreement on sharing of the Ganges waters issue was signed after the issue was taken before the United Nations.

It appears that India has not given up their link canal proposal and would use it as a precondition for a long term agreement on sharing of the waters of the Ganges. Keeping all options open India with her image as a big regional power has been exploring all possibilities of storing more and more waters in her own soil and beyond and in her bid to achieve the goal she is assured of international help.

Meanwhile, India has undertaken another scheme to harness the water of the Teesta and for that purpose a barrage has been constructed at Gazaldoba in Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal. The project would be put into commission in June next. The Indian government has also in hand some more small and medium size irrigation schemes which would use the waters of the international rivers flowing through Bangladesh from time immemorial and the economy of this part of the world is dependent on the availability of waters from those rivers.

Customary international law prohibits any country from obstructing the natural flow of an international river to the advantage of one country at the cost of sufferings of another country.

The Indian plea of Ganges water requirement for flushing of the Hooghly river to save the Calcutta port can never be equated with the Bangladesh requirement of water for her very existence. There is no alternative to water for Bangladesh but dredging could be an alternative to flushing Hooghly river.

India has violated her own commitment by not diverting

the waters of the Ganges at Farakka without an agreement with Bangladesh.

Bangladesh is left with very little options to meet her water requirements. A barrage at Bahadurabad for utilisation of Brahmaputra waters for servicing the Brahmaputra as well as the Ganges basin areas might be one of the schemes under consideration. This will however be an ambitious and costly project involving an expenditure of 10 billion US dollars and the project envisaged as a multipurpose project would require 15 years to complete. Without international help and assistance the question of construction of such a project cannot be conceived of. A scanty pre-feasibility survey has been made by an expert study group on the Brahmaputra Multipurpose Development Project (BMDP). The implementation of this project would also require an understanding with India as Brahmaputra is also an international river.

The other way to tackle the gigantic problem is the maximum utilisation of the rivers, khals, beals and haors of the country by constructing small and medium size reservoirs wherever possible.

These questions, are by no means the alternative to the natural flow of the international rivers into Bangladesh.

It is expected that India would see reason in resolving all the outstanding disputes with its neighbours, particularly with Bangladesh. The new Indian Prime Minister Mr. Rajiv Gandhi has taken a move in this direction. It is hoped that the new Indian leadership would be flexible in handling the problems with its immediate neighbours to ensure peace in the region which is a precondition for development of all the countries involved.

Problems with Muhuri River

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 18 Apr 85 pp 1, 8

[Article by Abdur Rahim and Khalilur Rahman]

[Text] Indian opposition to the construction of a small Union Parishad embankment along the river Muhuri at Feni to protect an area from erosion is a clear violation of the Indo-Bangladesh border agreement concluded between the two countries 11 years ago. The agreement signed on May 16, 1974, among

other things stipulated that both the countries should raise embankments on their respective sides with a view to stabilising the Muhuri river in its present course.

Meanwhile India had constructed a huge embankment on its side along the river Muhuri causing serious erosion on the Bangladesh side of the river at village Nijkalikaur under Parshuram Upazila. India has been carrying out its water projects including construction of embankments, barrages and groins along a large number of common rivers flowing between the two countries. The Gumti barrage project undertaken by India in Tripura is nearing completion exposing Bangladesh to further onslaught of floods and serious drought in vast areas of Comilla district. As many as 52 rivers flow between the two countries and arbitrary construction of barrages and embankments by India has caused enormous suffering to at least half of the total 10 crore people of this lower riparian country. At present Bangladesh is in a critical position facing a severe drought in the vast tract of land in northern and southern parts of the country.

Further, India has currently embarked on the construction of the major barrages on the rivers Khowai and Manu. When completed both the barrages on Indian side will adversely affect the irrigation system in Sylhet and cause ecological imbalance in the region. Moreover, the new settlements in forest areas in Assam and Tripura have obstructed the natural flow of rivers there during lean period and causing repeated flash floods in Bangladesh following heavy downpour there. The clearing of forests by the Indian authority to set up human habitation has also reduced the frequency and intensity of rainfall in the region. All these actions have been taken arbitrarily by India to the disregard of the bilateral agreement and violation of international law and convention.

As many as 36 "chharas" (small water channels) flow between India and Bangladesh in Feni and Noakhali districts. These water channels also face obstruction following the erection of dykes on the mouth of these "chharas" in Indian side. The farmers in Bangladesh who had so long been dependent on the water from these "chharas" for irrigation now at times get water supply under special arrangement on payment.

Border Accord Yet To Be Ratified

The Indo-Bangladesh border agreement of 1974 still awaits ratification by the Indian Parliament, while Bangladesh had promptly endorsed the agreement in the Parliament as soon as the accord was signed between the two countries in 1974. The violation of agreement by India during the last 11 years are too many which include the withdrawal of the Ganges water at Farakka and construction of barrage at Gazaldoba at Jalpaiguri to deprive Bangladesh of its due share on Teesta water. Non-fulfilment of Berubari agreement, harassment of the residents of Angarpota and Dahagram enclaves and occupation of South Talpaty and Shashan Char in Feni are other gross violation of the accord and norms on the part of India. The border agreement provides that both the countries will settle any dispute through mutual consultation. But India did not pay heed to the urgings of Bangladesh so long to resolve vital issues which now pose major

irritants in the normal relation between the big and small neighbours. Experts feel the issue of sharing water should be taken up in its totality and not on a piecemeal basis for the sake of arriving at a lasting solution which would promote better understanding and harmony between the two countries.

The observers feel the cause of Bangladesh has not been well projected in the international forum as it deserved, particularly in respect of gross violation of bilateral agreement by India. There are more than 67 lower riparian countries including Bangladesh around the globe and the problems Bangladesh now faces with India about the sharing of water is unique. The experts wonder how India being an upper riparian country can do away with the agreement and refuse to share water of international rivers with her lower riparian neighbours which tends to set a bad precedence in the comity of nations to the disadvantage of other lower riparian countries. It is high time that Bangladesh should take up the matter in the international forum if bilateral agreement fails to produce any result experts feel.

Muhuri Dike 'Justified'

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 3 May 85 p 1

[Text] The Bangladesh Joint Rivers Commission delegation told its Indian counterpart on Wednesday last that the embankment constructed by Bangladesh in its own territory on the bank of Muhuri river in Feni, to save a vast areas from erosion in accordance with the border agreement reached between the two neighbouring countries in 1974.

The erosion on the Bangladesh side at Nijkalikapur started since India constructed a huge embankment on her side at Belonia in 1980. The Indian Government took a serious note of the action taken by the Bangladesh Government to check increasing erosion problem on Bangladesh side.

Following Indian request a meeting of the Standing Committee of the Indo-Bangladesh Rivers Commission was held on Tuesday at Belonia (India). The delegations of the two countries visited the embankments on either side of the Muhuri. The Indian delegation was told that Bangladesh had not violated any provision of the agreement on the issue. The 1974 Border Agreement stipulated among other things that both the countries should raise embankments on their respective sides with a view to stabilising the Muhuri River in its present course. While the Border Agreement was promptly ratified by the then Bangladesh Parliament, India is yet to ratify the same. Tuesday's meeting of the JRC Standing Committee was headed by Mr. Rangachari from the Indian side and Mr. Amjad Hossain Khan from the Bangladesh side.

Meanwhile, India has not yet replied to a request for renewal of the agreement for sharing of the Ganges waters in the dry season. The last agreement period expired on May 31, 1984. And consequent upon the unilateral withdrawal of Ganges waters at Farakka, one third area of the country in the north and southern part of the Ganges basin in Bangladesh have been experiencing severe drought. Further India is going ahead with the construction of many more barrages and embankments on the common rivers flowing between the two countries

from time immemorial thus violating the international law and custom on the use of waters of common rivers.

A barrage on the River Teesta is nearing completion at Gajaldoba in Jaipalguri district of West Bengal. When commissioned this project would also adversely affect the natural irrigation system of Bangladesh, besides creating ecological imbalance.

It is expected that the 28th Ministerial level meeting of the Joint Rivers Commission would meet in Dhaka by the end of this month. The Indian delegation would be led by Irrigation Minister Mr. Sukramand and DCMLA and Minister for Irrigation Rear Admiral Sultan Ahmed would lead the Bangladesh delegation.

Observers feel that the whole gamut of the water issue should be discussed in the upcoming meeting and a negotiated settlement of the issue would remove the misunderstandings between the two neighbourly countries. Besides the Ganges and Teesta 50 more rivers flow through the two countries which have their origin in the Himalayas.

Meanwhile, a World Bank team will visit Bangladesh in the third week of this month. The World Bank team would be apprised of the water and irrigation projects to be taken up by Bangladesh including the Brahmaputra Multipurpose Development Project which would require a huge investment. Bangladesh would also approach the World Bank to help materialise its irrigation schemes with financial and technical assistance.

Meanwhile India has remained silent over the Bangladesh request to renew the agreement on sharing the waters of the Ganges in the dry season.

Results of Farakka Withdrawal

Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English 20 Apr 85 p 1

[Article by Amirul Islam]

[Text]

PABNA, Apr 19 : The devastating effect of the unilateral withdrawal of the Ganges water at Farakka by India has hit hard 14 districts in the northern and southern regions of the country.

Standing crops—IRRI and Boro paddy—on over four lakh acres of land in the two regions are being damaged due to lack of irrigation waters in the wake of all time low flow of the Ganges and consequent drying up of its tributaries and canals and beels in the areas.

The situation has deteriorated to such an extent that more than 75 percent of the power pumps engaged in irrigation in the districts have turned inoperative and about 50 percent of the shallow tubewells have

gone out of operation since the underground water level has recorded a drastic fall of about 30 feet on an average in many areas in the affected districts.

The unusual fall in the underground water level has rendered inoperative handtubewells in many areas causing an acute scarcity of drinking water as well.

The long spell of drought in the northern region has further worsened the situation.

Meanwhile, the water level of the Ganges at Hardinge Bridge point has been falling by about two inches a day surpassing all previous records due to the withdrawal of waters at Farakka. According to official sources, if this continues, the water level at Hardinge Bridge

will come down to the lowest ever, 13 feet on April 30, not to speak of the further worsening situation in the remaining 30 days of the current lean season, the sources added.

Two power pumps of the Ganges-Kobadak project at Bhera mara have now been operating much below their installed capacity due to insufficiency of water in the intake channel following the poor flow of the Ganges. This has affected IRRI and Boro paddy on about 90 thousand acres of land under the project for lack of irrigation water. Water is now being supplied on the basis of rationing.

The unofficial estimates said, in the northern region, about one lakh acres of IRRI

and Boro paddy in Pabna and Sirajganj districts and 1.23 lakh acres in Rajshahi, Chapai Nawabganj and Naogaon districts are being damaged due to lack of irrigation waters. Besides, IRRI and Boro on vast areas of Bogha, Jaipurhat and Natore districts are also being badly affected for non-availability of water.

Standing IRRI and Boro paddy in six districts of the southern region are also being damaged for lack of irrigation waters. The crops on about 30 per cent of the total area have been completely damaged, the estimates said.

The six affected districts are Kushtia, Chuadanga, Meherpur, Jhenidah, Magura and Jessore.

Some Optimism Seen

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 3 May 85 p 5

[Editorial]

[Text]

Outside the rhetoric of hope and diplomatic common places passed between spokesmen of India and Bangladesh, one perceives a whiff of 'optimism' bearing on a possible solution of outstanding problems between the two countries. Apart from the recent talks held in Dhaka between Indian Foreign Secretary, Mr. Romesh Bhandari and his Bangladesh counterpart there have been also exchanges of views in New Delhi between the Bangladesh Foreign Adviser and Indian officials including a meeting with Indian Prime Minister Mr. Rajiv Gandhi. The focus of all this contact has been the hitherto unresolved disputes over the sharing of the Ganges waters, boundary settlement, barbed wire fencing etc.

The reported change of climate, if any, and the "keenness of desire" on the part of the Indian leadership to improve bilateral relations is explicable in terms of the need to bring to an end thirty-seven years of stalemate and the straining of relation created by it in what could have been a cordial neighbourly relationship. Mr. Gandhi's prospective visit to Dhaka taking place against such a background is also expected to help with a way out of a generation-long contention. It is time for both India and Bangladesh to realise that, given the understanding and the necessary political will, there can be nothing that should preclude a permanent solution to all the pending issues. Within such a frame of mental preparedness and the compulsion of natural and human conditions we can readdress ourselves to the three main issues: (1)

the distribution of the Ganges and Teesta waters and a general settlement concerning all the rivers shared by the two countries; (ii) implementation of the 1974 land-boundary agreement including the TinBigha corridor part of it; (iii) barbed wire fences proposed by India along the Bangladesh border.

Not to repeat what has been earlier said in this column about the irrigational, navigational and ecological problems created for Bangladesh by the water shortage, the urgent need is a comprehensive solution of the entire water problem on a permanent basis including all its aspects such as augmentation during the lean season, upstream unilateral withdrawal, joint control of rivers and so on. In our earlier comments on the subject we have referred to the continuing vacuum in this regard since the expiry of the Ganges water agreement in May 1984, and its fall-out. We have urged, in vain, so far a renewal of the agreement on the basis of equitable distribution of the Ganges water and a durable solution of the other problems. The dispute over the embankment across the Muhuri river has introduced a new dimension into the overall water dispute. It needs to be pointed out in this context that India has set up river-regulating devices in their parts of the rivers including the Teesta and Muhuri with no reference whatever to Bangladesh. The Indian objection to Bangladesh's Muhuri project is therefore out of keeping with normal bilateral obligations.

The boundary agreement has been hanging fire for ten years. A permanent settlement of the dispute also needs to be found without further delay through the implementation of the agreement in letter and spirit. Next to the water dispute, the unsettled issues of TinBigha corridor, Angarpota and Talpatty remain a major 'irritant' in the bilateral relationship. Last but not least, is the barbed wire fencing. This is a new edge introduced in the very concept of partition. It would cut sharper. It has an intensely human and natural aspect never to be lost sight of, as it is never, anywhere in the world, except where a political 'wall' is raised to divide a city or a 'line' exists across which religious or sectarian groups fight each other.

Following partition and, later, the emergence of Bangladesh, human mobility along and across a 1400-mile border has continued as a matter of natural intercourse under the law of natural easement. This civil law applies to movement of an individual across territory not his own but necessary to 'ease' his movement across. The same law, given the same conditions of human need and relationship and movement, should, in fairness, be the basis of inter-territory movement for the residents on either side of the border. This is some-

thing that cannot be or need not be stopped by raising artificial barriers. That would be inhuman and unnatural. This is not to suggest, though, that citizens of one country would go and settle in the country across the border. The proposed barbed wire therefore is as untenable in conception as it would be unnatural—and unhuman—in execution.

Therefore as a country more wronged against than wronging so far, Bangladesh most wistfully expects that the new milieu seemingly created by what has lately appeared to be a more imaginative and reasonable approach assumed by the Indian leadership, a sizable something would emerge to help improve relations.

CSO: 4600/1571

BANGLADESH

DEVELOPMENTS IN INDO-BANGLADESH BORDER PROBLEMS REPORTED

Border Talks Cordial

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 26 Apr 85 p 1

[Text] The bilateral border talks between Bangladesh and Indian delegation concluded in Dhaka on Thursday, reports BSS.

The two sides covered the entire range of border issues during talks, which was held in a cordial and friendly atmosphere. It was agreed that the BDR and BSF would continue to work in close cooperation as provided for in the India-Bangladesh border guide lines 1975.

The Bangladesh delegation for the conference was led by the Director-General of the Bangladesh Rifles, Major General R.A.M. Golan Muktadir, while the Indian side was led by Mr. M. C. Misra Director General of Border Security Force.

Mr. M. C. Mista on Thursday called on Home Minister Major General Abdul Mannan Siddiqui.

He also called on Home Secretary Qazi Azher Ali and Foreign Secretary Mr. Faruq A Chowdhury.

The delegation left for Delhi on Thursday evening.

Problems With Tin Bigha

Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English 28 Apr 85 p 1

[Article by Matiur Rahman]

[Text]

Prospect of handing over of 'Tin Bigha' by India to Bangladesh in near future has again become bleak because of filing now another case in the Calcutta High Court against it.

The Indian Prime Minister's envoy during his recent visit to Dhaka 'was learnt to

have informed the Bangladesh side about filing an injunction suit by an Indian national challenging the acquisition of lands for the corridor for the handing over.

The Indian envoy Foreign Secretary Romesh Bhandari, however, had assured that the

case might be dismissed by the court within a couple of months.

The Tin Bigha corridor was due to be handed to Bangladesh under the provision of the 1974 Indo-Bangladesh land boundary agreement signed by late Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and India's late Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi.

Bangladesh had already handed over Berubari to India immediately after signing the agreement with the hope of getting the corridor facilities for her two enclaves Dahagram and Angorpota on the northern tip of Rangpur district.

In addition to the 1974-agreement, the two countries again signed a new agreement on handing over the Tin Bigha corridor in October 1982 at the summit of President General Ershad and India's late Prime Minister during the first official visit of the former to Delhi.

Meanwhile, the Calcutta High Court had already disposed off the first case that remained for long an impediment in the way of implementing the agreement by handing over the corridor to Bangladesh.

Following the disposal of the case filed against the handing over, the Indian Government was learnt to have started marking the corridor lands at Tin Bigha and Bangladesh was expecting an early hand-over of the corridor.

According to legal experts, any of the Indian High Courts can challenge such action by the Indian Government till the agreement signed by the two sovereign countries is ratified by her Parliament.

The 1974-land boundary agreement has not yet been ratified by Indian Parliament even after 11 years of its signing.

Official circles in Dhaka however, could not explain the reasons given by the Indian side for ratifying the agreement by Indian Parliament so that it could override such judicial challenges.

Bangladesh had ratified the agreement immediately after the signing by her parliament to give it legal effect for implementation.

BANGLADESH

DHAKA DEPRECIATES GREATLY AGAINST SURGING DOLLAR

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 18 Apr 85 pp 1, 8

[Article by Reazuddin Ahmed]

[Text] Bangladesh currency has depreciated against surging dollar by about 225 per cent since 1972 and by over 85 per cent since the last devaluation in April 1975. The value of Taka in relation to U.S. Dollar fell by 85 per cent through frequent adjustment of official exchange rate over the last one decade.

During the current fiscal year Taka has been devalued six times through downward adjustment of official exchange rate. The adjustments were made in August September October November and twice in February last. The last adjustment fixed the value of our currency in relation to Dollar 1 = Taka 26.47. Last year the exchange rate was adjusted downward four times and the year 1983-84 closed with the value of one dollar to Taka 25.23. The value of Taka in relation to pound sterling however declined only to the extent of 15 per cent since 1975. The price of one pound was Taka 30 in 1975 which is now Taka 33. But that does not indicate the strength of Taka but reveals the weakness of pound sterling.

The exchange rate of Taka as being determined according to the basket method. Basket method means the weighted average of the exchange rate of a basket of currencies which include in our context U.S. dollar pound sterling deutsche mark yen Indian and Pakistani rupee. The value of Taka in relation to basket currencies is being determined taking into account the nominal movement of exchange rate and inflation rate of the basket currencies. The inflation rate in Bangladesh is on an average 12 per cent as against 8 to 9 per cent in India and Pakistan and much lower in the U.S.A. and the U.K FRG and Japan. The difference of the inflation of the basket currencies is to be adjusted to maintain the par value for keeping the price of exports stable which warrants the refixation of exchange rate. And unfortunately in Bangladesh the adjustment is always downward due to high inflation rate.

The official exchange rate of Taka in 1973-74 was \$1= Taka 8 which was raised to Taka 14.50 for one dollar in 1975 through devaluation of our currency by 58 per cent. The exchange rate in relation to U.S. dollar was Taka 15 in 1979-80 Taka 16 in 1980-81 Taka 23.76 in 1982-83 which indicate depreciation of Taka by 197 per cent within the period between 73-74 and 82-83 according to a study by bids.

Flexible Exchange Rate System

Prior to 1978 the exchange rate was determined as per Smithsonian formula which means maintaining the par value of Taka with other currencies with the flexibility of 2 per cent fluctuations either way. But this system was abolished on April 1 1978 consequent upon the second amendment of the IMF article of agreement which provided for flexible exchange rate system from April 2, 1978. Under this system Taka can be pegged to any currency, there can be joint or independent floating and basket system. Bangladesh has pegged in Taka with dollar and is following the basket method for determining the exchange rate.

The frequent downward adjustment of Taka with dollar sterling and other currencies has been raising the cost of our imports. It is also claimed that the export earning has increased due to adjustment of exchange rate.

When contacted the Governor of Bangladesh Bank said that the exchange rate has stabilised to a great extent over the past few years. In 1982-83 the exchange rate was Taka 23.76 which rose to Taka 26.47 in two-year time. The exchange rate depreciated only by Taka 1.24 in last one year. We should call this a stable exchange rate, the Governor said.

Export Boosting

Asked how to improve the value of Taka in relation to other currencies, the Governor said the value of Taka can be appreciated to other currencies through boosting exports and curtailing imports. He also agreed with this correspondent that by improving the economy and price situation inflation can be brought down which will infuse new strength to our currency.

The continuation of the multiple rate of exchange in Bangladesh has been endorsed by IMF temporarily. The IMF pressed that the system cannot continue as a permanent measure.

The advantage of the multiple rate of exchange is that it is encouraging remittances and boosting exports of non-traditional goods. But the disadvantage is bigger which affects the vast multitude of consumers. The higher rate of dollars in the secondary market pushes the price of imported goods and the importers who get the cash allocation do not pass on the benefit to the consumers. To cite an example, the importer who gets the cash licence for import of milk food purchases the dollars at official rate which is about 15 per cent less than that of the secondary market. The import of milk food is allowed under Wage Earner Scheme & the importer buys the dollar at a higher price to the extent of 15 per cent to import under Wage Earner Scheme. This gives the instant margin of 15 per cent to the cash licence holder and he often sells the document through manipulation. This happens because there cannot be two prices in the market for the same commodity and the price of milk food will be determined by the imports under Wage Earner Scheme. The question has been raised why the Government is allowed the same item under cash and Wage Earner Scheme while the price is dictated by the importers who bring goods under Wage Earner Scheme? This makes the existence of multiple rate of exchange debatable.

The Governor of the Bangladesh Bank said it has both advantages and disadvantages. Bangladesh Bank has halted the manipulation of prices of foreign exchange in the secondary market through intervention. Otherwise the price of dollar in the secondary market which is now Taka 31 would have gone much higher.

CSO: 4600/1571

BANGLADESH

FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESERVE DWINDLES, LIQUIDITY CRISIS

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 26 Apr 85 pp 1, 10

[Article by Reazuddin Ahmed]

[Text] Unplanned import of sugar and extra-budgetary requirement of foreign exchange for cash purchase of foodgrains and petroleum products during the current fiscal year have created pressure on the already sliding foreign exchange reserve of the country.

The foreign exchange reserve of the country now stands at 380 million U.S. dollars as against 512 million dollars in July last. The decline in foreign exchange earning is mainly due to the fall in home bound remittances.

The export earning has however showed an improvement during the current year and the earning is expected to be 938 million U.S. dollars as against the target of 900 million U.S. dollars during 1984-85. The higher export of non-traditional goods particularly readymade garments increased the volume of Export Performance Licence (XPL). The budgetary provision of XPL was to the tune of Taka 400 crores which will now increase by 150 crore more. The earning from export of readymade garments during the nine months of the current fiscal year has been estimated at Taka 98 crore as against the target of Taka 47 crore.

During the current fiscal year Bangladesh had to purchase 7 lakh tons of foodgrains from her cash resources. The total import stands at about 16 lakh tons. The remaining quantum was received as aids and grants.

The Petroleum Corporation has placed a demand for extra foreign exchange requirement of Taka 205 crore for the import of Petroleum products. For the month of May the requirement is Taka 108 crore and for June Taka 97 crore. The total budget of Petroleum imports during the current fiscal year was Taka 1030 crore. The source of financing was Taka 675 crore from cash resources, Taka 200 crore from Islamic Development Bank, Tk. 108 crore from Wage Earner's Scheme and Taka 47 crore from barter. But the latest position shows that the cash resources financing has exceeded by Taka 60 lakh and that of wage earner's by Taka 10 crore.

But the shortfall is to the tune of Taka 100 crore from Islamic Development Bank and Taka 30 crore in barter trade. The total import of petroleum products till April stands at Taka 912 crore. The Petroleum Corporation needs Taka 205 crore more to continue the import during the months of May and June. The Ministry of Finance is learnt to have sent the proposal for extra-budgetary provision of Taka 205 crore to Bangladesh Bank for the op- [words illegible] likely to advise the Ministry to procure the dollars from the secondary market.

The Petroleum Corporation sources said that they need the extra amount for meeting the increased quantum of petroleum products this year. The source stated that the consumption of diesel has increased due to sustained drought in the northern districts and that of furnace oil increased by one lakh tons to meet the requirement at the newly launched 110mw power plant in North Bengal. The source further said that consumption of kerosene will be around 3.50 lakh tons this year as against the normal requirement of 3.15 lakh tons, the requirement of diesel will be about 5.75 lakh tons as against the last year's consumption of 5 lakh tons. The requirement of aviation fuel will be around 65 thousand tons this year compared to the normal demand of 60 thousand tons. The increase will be due to more hajj flights as there will be no ship for transporting the pilgrims to Jeddah.

The import of edible oil is to the tune of Taka 26 crore till April. The annual budget for the item is Taka 47 crore.

Liquidity Crisis in Banks

Meanwhile the Bangladesh Bank's directive to observe strict credit control measures resulted in liquidity crisis in the commercial banks. The commercial banks are facing serious liquidity crisis in financing the on-going projects. The Sonali Bank has already approached the Bangladesh Bank for release of liquidity to finance the industrial projects from the Bank's own resources. The Krishi Bank advises the new entrepreneurs to manage cash portion of the project as they can not give taka protion due to liquidity problem.

When contacted Bangladesh Bank Governor said that there is no foreign exchange problem at the moment and also hinted that there would be no problem in near future. He said the present foreign exchange reserve is quite satisfactory. He agreed with a suggestion that the sugar import to the tune of over 60 million US dollars was unplanned.

Regarding the present credit restrictions the Governor said this will continue unless the recovery of the overdues of the commercial banks improve.

CSO: 4600/1570

BANGLADESH

REPORTAGE ON GOODWILL TEAM'S VISIT TO BURMA

Headed by Labor Minister

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 10 Apr 85 pp 1, 8

[Text] RANGOON Apr. 9--Bangladesh and Burma today expressed their desire to further develop their cooperation in various fields including trade reports BSS.

The determination to expand and intensify the bilateral cooperation was expressed when the Foreign Minister of Burma Mr. Chit Halaing and the Labour and Manpower Minister Mr. Anisul Islam Mahmud who is leading a goodwill delegation from Bangladesh met here this afternoon in Burmese capital.

The goodwill delegation originally scheduled to be led by the Foreign Adviser Mr. Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury have contributed to further boosting of the every friendly and close neighbourly relations between Bangladesh and Burma

Mr. Chowdhury had to cancel his trip at the last moment as he suddenly fell ill.

Mr. Mahmud and Mr Halaing expressed happiness over the way the bilateral cooperation was expanding between Burma and Bangladesh. Echoing similar feelings and sentiments the two Ministers emphasised the need to further develop the very close and friendly relations between the two Asian neighbours.

After the formal talks between the two Ministers the Bangladesh goodwill delegation led by Mr. Mahmud told BSS that both the sides briefed each other about the development efforts being carried out by the governments in the two countries for the welfare of their peoples.

Stressing that there were no problems between the two countries the two Ministers described the growing trade and political cooperation between Bangladesh and Burma as 'excellent'

The diplomatic circles here generally believe that the current goodwill visit by the Bangladesh Minister had definitely contributed to further development of the very friendly relations between two neighbouring countries having no bilateral problems.

Political Cooperation

Mr. Mahmud and Mr. Chit Hlaing described the political cooperation between the two neighbours as 'excellent' and underscored the scope to further develop trade and economic cooperation in the best of spirit between the two neighbouring southern countries.

The two Ministers also explained to each other that the efforts were being made in their respective countries for the attainment of economic self reliance.

The two sides also stressed on the diversification of trade between their countries

The two Ministers wished each others progress and prosperity and reiterated that the friendship and cooperation between the two Asian neighbours already examples for others were in their mutual interests

During the very friendly exchange of views the two Ministers resolved to intensify cooperation in various fields including trade culture and peace in the regional and international contexts.

Earlier at a meeting with the Burmese Trade Minister Mr. Ye Goung Mr. Mahmud discussed in details the ways and means to expand trade between Bangladesh and Burma as far as prcticable.

Increase of trade between the two countries Mr. Mahmud said was in the interests of the two Third World develop as practicable

The two Ministers in this regard recalled a recent trade agreement between the two neighbours providing for export of 30,000 metric tons of Burmese rice to Bangladesh and 9.2 million metric tonnes of gunny bags from Bangladesh to Burma.

Both the sides felt that there were still much more scope to further trade and economic cooperation between the two countries making efforts in their separate ways not only to develop their economies but also improve the lot of their common man.

Press Conference on Return

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH TIMES in English 12 Apr 85 pp 1, 8

[Text] The Labour and Manpower Minister, Mr. Anisul Islam Mahmud, said in Dhaka on Friday that the visit of Bangladesh goodwill delegation to Burma ended in a "happy note" and the two sides agreed to promote further the bilateral economic cooperation, reports BSS.

The Minister, who let the Bangladesh delegation, told newsmen on return from Burma that his talks with the Burmese leaders were "nice, cordial and upto satisfaction."

Mr. Mahmud said Bangladesh emphasised on the expansion and diversification of trade between the two countries and indicated that a trade delegation from Rangoon would visit Bangladesh in the near future.

He said the two sides also discussed the possibility of making state trading arrangements between Bangladesh and Burma.

The Minister pointed out that under a recent trade agreement Bangladesh would import 30,000 metric tons of rice from Burma and export 9.2 million metric tons of gunny bags.

Describing the Bangladesh-Burma relations as very good Mr Mahmud said "we do not have any outstanding issue" with Burma. The other members of Bangladesh delegation were Maj. Gen. R.A.M. Golam Muktadir and Mr M. Anwar Hashim, Director-General of the Foreign Ministry.

CSO: 4600/1562

BANGLADESH

IMF EXTENDS SPECIAL SUPPORT TO BANGLADESH

Dhaka HOLIDAY in English 19 Apr 85 p 1

[Text]

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has extended special financial support to Bangladesh which would be equivalent to nearly 55 million Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) as a part of its move to provide balance of payments assistance which was affected by the massive cereal crop failure and consequential increase in the cost of foodgrain imports.

The executive board of IMF in its April 10 meeting approved Bangladesh's request for providing 54.95 million SDR equivalent to around 145 crore taka under the Compensatory Financing Facility (CFF) in respect of excess cost of foodgrain imports for meeting the shortage of food production and to maintain a more reasonable level of foodgrain stocks. The massive import of foodgrains was necessitated to ensure adequate grain supply through public food distribution system and assure the urban middle class a tolerable price level.

In drawing this sum from the IMF, Bangladesh had assured the Fund to swallow its bitter necessity

under the contractual obligations and expressed its readiness to cooperate with the Fund in its effort to find, where required, appropriate solutions for the balance of payments difficulties.

Approving the CFF drawings, the executive board of the IMF gave an indication for taking further adjustment measures to overcome the balance of payment difficulties. The board noted with satisfaction Bangladesh's clean record of cooperation with the Fund in adopting corrective measures in line with the Fund's prescription.

The depleting stock of foodgrains in 1983 coupled with the losses of rice crops owing to drought and series of floods last year forced Bangladesh to purchase large quantities of foodgrains on commercial terms from the international market during the current financial year. The commercial imports of foodgrains registered an increase from about 90 million SDR in 1982-83 to 266.6 million SDR in 1984-85 due to import of over 2.7 million tons as against the projected

target of 1.65 million tons during the current fiscal year.

The government has made cash purchase of foodgrains worth 100 million US dollars to meet the exigencies. In addition the government has contracted imports of foodgrains worth 200 million dollars on deferred payment basis.

The short term debt obligations incurred on the commercial purchase of foodgrains along with the foreign exchange spending will create strains in the balance of payments management in the short and medium term.

Bangladesh might have to resort to more adjustment measures including upward revision of government administered prices, ration prices and tariffs of the different utility services like water, power, gas etc in the next financial year as a part of its corrective measures under different obligations.

At present Bangladesh has IMF quota of 287.5 million S. D. R. and its outstanding financial obligations to the fund excluding trust fund loans, is estimated

at 356.5 million SDR.

The CFF facility was established in 1963 to provide financial assistance to member countries who are suffering from the balance of payments difficulties originating from the export shortfalls due to factors beyond the member's control. This has mainly benefited the exporter countries of the primary commodities. The CFF coverage was extended on the suggestion of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and World Food Council (WFC) to the members whose balance of payments was affected by the cereal crop failure and sharp rise in the cost of cereal imports.

The total amount of outstanding purchases under the CFF to cover cereal crop failure is 83 per cent of quota. There is, however, an overall limit of 105 per cent of quota on outstanding drawings under this facility for both export and cereal crop shortfall.

Bangladesh will pay the service charge to the tune of 274.750 SDR on the date of purchase. The repurchase will be made in accordance with the Fund's policies.

10 June 1985

BANGLADESH

PLANS FOR FOREIGN AID DISBURSEMENT TOLD

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 17 Apr 85 pp 1, 8

[Article by Moazzem Hossain]

[Text] The latest official assessment shows that foreign aid disbursement in 1984-85 will be maintained at the level of 1500 million US dollars. Though 115 million dollars short of the original target of 1615 million US dollars the disbursement of foreign aid in the current financial year which closes in June next will be about ten per cent higher than the related level at 1268 million US dollars last year (1983-84).

Project aid disbursement at 700 million US dollars will be 26.81 per cent higher in 1984-85 than that of 552 million US dollars in 1983-84. The amount of 700 million US dollars during the current financial year includes one hundred million dollars made available to the development financial institutions (DFIs) and other agencies for supporting investment operations in the private sector.

Project aid availability under the latest official assessment will stand at 600 million US dollars for funding the public sector development activities within the umbrella of Annual Development Programme (ADP). In the original ADP of Taka 38.96 billion for the current year, project aid component was targetted at 724.31 million US dollars (Taka 1847 crore at the exchange rate of Taka 25.5 for one US dollar).

Non-project aid (covering commodity aid and food aid) disbursement level in 1984-85 is now expected to be maintained at the level of 800 million US dollars. Excluding PL-480 Title II and III food grant assistance operations the food and commodity assistance was originally projected at the level of about 712 million dollars for the current year with commodity aid accounting for 267 million dollars and food aid, 245 million dollars. The latest official assessment thus shows a higher amount of disbursements in non-project assistance in 1984-85 than what was originally targetted. The increase in food aid disbursements by the donors in the wake of the devastating crop damage due to floods in the early part of the current financial year has been mainly responsible for a higher volume in non-project assistance in 1984-85. The disbursement of non-project assistance totalled 716 million dollars in 1983-84 with food aid disbursement amounting to 277 million dollars and commodity aid 439 million dollars.

Public Investments Won't Go Up

The higher volume of foreign aid disbursements will not, however lead to higher level of public investments under the ADP this year. Resources constraints for development funding purposes have lingered on because of the post-flood recovery and rehabilitation operations by the Government. The size of the original ADP in 1984-85 is now being slashed. The revised ADP, according to knowledgeable official sources will be sized at the level of Taka 35 billion, showing a downward adjustment by about four billion (400 crore) Takas of the original ADP. The project aid component for funding the revised ADP will be around Taka 15.60 billion.

The total flood damage this year has been estimated by the Ministry of Finance at Taka 950 crore. Such a colossal damage in different sectors like food-crops, jute, sugarcane livestock dams, roads dwellings etc. has necessitated a massive foodgrain import operation (involving aid deferred payments and cash purchases) and other rehabilitation and recovery programmes to overcome the crisis. The IDA flood rehabilitation programme of 40 million US dollars has however provided some cushion to the Government in post-flood management of the economy and the programme is to be completed within a two-year period.

With a substantial amount of domestic resources claimed by the exigencies of the flood, the resources availability position for funding the overall public sector development activities has been under strains in 1984-85. The revised ADP side of Taka 35 billion during the current financial year will thus be marginally short in nominal terms, of the last year's revised ADP at Taka 35.85 billion. In real terms with inflationary factor taken into account, the shortfall will be higher.

Growth Rate To Be 3.8 Pc.

According to the knowledgeable circles the current year's economic growth rate will be around 3.8 per cent as against the projected target of six per cent. The setbacks in agricultural sector (particularly the food crop sub-sector) have caused the growth process to receive a major jolt. With agriculture accounting for over 50 per cent of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the estimated crop damage of about 1.5 million tons by the floods has been responsible for a lower GDP growth this year at 3.8 per cent compared to 4.5 per cent last year.

A highly-placed official source claimed that the GDP growth rate in 1984-85 would have exceeded the target of six per cent if there were no flood damage. He noted that a gain or loss of one million tons in foodgrains alone made a difference of two per cent in GDP growth rate because of the predominant share of agricultural sector in the overall economic activities. The same source pointed out that the industrial growth in 1984-85 had also suffered a setback because of constraints in supply of agricultural output in sectors like jute and sugarcane and also because of adverse income effects of the flood damage. The jute and sugar industries and cotton textiles accounting for 50 per cent of the total industrial output in the country have faltered in performance leading to low industrial growth in 1984-85, he added.

10 June 1985

BANGLADESH

PAPERS REPORT VISIT OF INDIAN FOREIGN SECRETARY

Arrival, Secretaries Meet

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH TIMES in English 16 Apr 85 pp 1, 8

[Text] The outstanding issues which irritate the relations between Bangladesh and India are likely to be reviewed during the current talks between the Foreign Secretaries of the two countries.

Though no positive outcome on specific issues is likely to emerge out of the current series of talks, the talks can be characterised as an exercise in the direction of finding out a new approach.

The exercise began with the arrival of Mr Ramesh Bhandari, Foreign Secretary of India on Monday to Dhaka on a two-day visit to Bangladesh and his first round of formal talks with Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Farooq A. Choudhury.

Any meeting between the two sides generates optimism among the people. But one should not suffer from illusion that issues which had eluded solution for so long, would be solved in just one meeting. The current series of talks were certainly another attempt to resolve issues. This might be the beginning of a process towards new efforts for better understanding and cooperation.

The meeting between the two Foreign Secretaries had no specific agenda. So, the host country Bangladesh was in a position to raise any issue or topic it liked. And Bangladesh, during the first round of talks at Foreign Office in the afternoon, did raise all the long standing issues which are vital in nature for Bangladesh. These issues included sharing of the Ganges water, transfer of Tin Bigha to Bangladesh, Talpatty dispute, barbed wire fence etc.

After the first round of talks Mr Ramesh Bhandari told newsmen that "we had very fruitful and constructive exchange of views". They discussed very wide range of bilateral and international issues and outstanding bilateral problems. The discussions were constructive, he said.

A Bangladesh Foreign Office spokesman said that the two side discussed all the bilateral issues. Declining to predict the outcome of the talks, the spokesman said that talks were continuing. So, it would not be pragmatic to expect specific solution of the problems.

The spokesman, however, admitted that "there is an air of optimism"

Mr Ramesh Bhandari was assisted in the talks by Mr S. T. Devare, Joint Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Mr I.P. Khosla and Deputy High Commissioner, Mr Himachal Som. While Mr Farooq A. Choudrury was assisted by Ambassador C. M. Shafi Shami, Director General and Mr Jamil Majid, Director.

The talks will resume today (Tuesday) before Mr Bhandari's departure from Dhaka.

Earlier on his arrival Mr Bhandari told newsmen of Zia International Airport that the basic attitude, 'of his mission was to solve the outstanding problems and know and understand each other.

He said the visit--his first to Dhaka--'as part of directive of the Indian Prime Minister is to improve relations with the neighbours.

The Indian Foreign Secretary said he had 'no specific issues' up his sleeve and would mainly discuss 'the broad issues' and added 'I hope Mr Faruq A. Chowdhury will raise the specific issues.'

Asked how serious was India about solving the outstanding bilateral problems and irritants Mr. Bhandari said 'first let us know each other.'

The Ganges sharing problem, the South Talpatty Island dispute, implementation of the 1974 Land Boundary Agreement and Indian plan to put up barbed wire fences around Bangladesh are the major irritants in the Bangladesh--India relations.

On the outstanding Ganges dispute the situation aggravated due to India's remaining non-responsive to sign a permanent sharing agreement and its unilateral diversion of the river's waters through Farakka barrage since January 1 last.

Replying to questions Mr. Bhandari said certainly he would discuss any issue to be raised, within his technical capacity

Asked what attitude India reflected by resorting to the unilateral action on the Ganges and whether the problem would be resolved during the meeting, Mr. Bhandari described the Ganges as 'a complicated problem' and said to expect that all the problems to be resolved in one meeting would be 'a utopia.

Asked how serious India was to shelve the barbed wire fence project along Bangladesh border Mr. Bhandari said that there was 'a possibility' that the fence project might be shelved as had been reported in the Indian press.

Answering to how far his mission was publicity oriented and how far it had genuine desire to solve the problems and promote cooperation and understanding, Mr. Bhandari said 'I think we are way past publicity stunts or nuances if there is something we say, we mean it and that's what we want from the other

side bearing in mind the principles to which both the countries are committed and about which your President has said in a couple of interviews.'

Mr. Bhandari said that the new Indian government of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was keen to improve India's relations with its neighbours.

He said that development cooperative relations in the South Asian region was not only bilateral but also a collective 'necessity and imperative.'

Mr Bhandari said he looked forward to "very constructive talks and also see the country".

He said the problems have to be tackled to come to an understanding which would pave the way for cooperative and constructive cooperation.

Asked whether he thought the major regional problems could be resolved by the SARC he said it (SARC) was "one forum which could play a complimentary role to other forums.

Asked whether he was carrying any specific proposal to resolve the outstanding irritants between Bangladesh and India, he replied in the negative.

But he said, "Let us understand each other if either side feels there is an issue which is an irritant then it is an irritant. Cooperation does not mean a unilateral stands'.

Asked how far his fence mending trip to Sri Lanka attained success Mr Bhandari described the problem in Sri Lanka as 'rather a complicated one which remained unresolved for long and has now reached a new height' He said, it needs a solution to the satisfaction of all concerned.

The Indian Foreign Secretary will call on President and CMLA Lt Gen H.M. Ershad, DCMLA and Minister for Communications, DCMLA and Minister for Industries and Commerce, Minister for Hosme Affairs and Secretaries of External Resources Division and Irrigation today (Tuesday).

Meeting With Ershad

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 17 Apr 85 pp 1, 8

[Text] The visiting Indian Foreign Secretary, Mr Ramesh Bhandari called on the President and Chief Martial Law Administrator, Lt. Gen. Hussain Muhammad Ershad at Bangabhaban in Dhaka on Tuesday, reports BSS.

Bangabhaban spokesman told BSS that during the meeting with the President, Mr Bhandari conveyed a message from Indian Premier Mr Rajiv Gandhi to President Ershad.

They reviewed the discussions the Indian Foreign Secretary had with the Bangladesh officials during his visit in Dhaka

President Ershad was satisfied at the outcome of the visit of Mr Bhandari. He requested him to convey his best wishes to the Indian Prime Minister Mr Rajiv Gandhi.

Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Mr Faruq Ahmed Chowdhury and the Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Mr I P Khosla were present on the occasion.

Mr Bhandari came in Dhaka on Monday on a two-day visit as the special envoy of Premier Rajiv Gandhi in quest of improving relations with the neighbouring countries.

Mr Romesh Bhandari called on the DCMLA and Minister for Communications, Ports, Shipping; IWT and Irrigation, Water Development and Flood Control Rear Admiral Sultan Ahmad at the Naval Headquarters in Dhaka on Tuesday morning.

Mr Bhandari discussed matters of bilateral interests with the DCMLA.

The Indian Foreign Secretary also called on the DCMLA and Minister for Industries, Commerce, Jute and Textiles Air Vice-Marshal Sultan Mahmud at his office chamber at CMLA Secretariat on Tuesday morning.

They exchanged views on bilateral issues and discussed matters of mutual interest. The meeting lasted for half an hour.

Mr Bhandari was also called on Home Minister Maj. Gen. Abdul Mannan Siddiqui at his office in Bangladesh Secretariat.

Another report says: The visiting Foreign Secretary of India Mr Romesh Bhandari, called on Principal Finance Secretary and Adviser to the President, Mr M. Syeduzzaman, at the latter's office on Tuesday.

They discussed matters relating to economic and technical cooperation between the two countries.

Present in the meeting were Indian High Commissioner in Dhaka Mr I P Khosla and Mr M Murar-uz-Zaman; Secretary, ERCP.

Press Conference on Departure

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 17 Apr 85 pp 1, 8

[Text] Indian Foreign Secretary Romesh Bhandari disclosed on Tuesday that the ministerial level Joint Rivers Commission would meet in Dhaka soon after the current Indian Parliament session that ends on May 17 to solve the Ganges water sharing and autmentation issues

He informed that the Director-General of Indian Border Security Forces (BSF) and Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) would meet next week to discuss the issues regarding border fence and other related border problems.

Addressing a Press conference at the Zia International Airport before his departure for New Delhi after a 26-hour visit to Dhaka, the Indian Foreign Secretary termed the Ganges water issue as a "longstanding problem that required urgent and detailed consideration". He felt that the problem should have been looked into earlier with high priority. He pointed out that due to the general elections, polls in different states and the developments in India this issue could not be taken up.

Briefing newsmen about the talks he had with his Bangladesh counterpart, Mr Faruque A. Chowdhury, he said that the two sides agreed to deal with the outstanding problems between the two neighbours. He added that the two sides had political will to solve the outstanding problems expeditiously and develop the Indo-Bangladesh relations in a positive manner within the framework which President Ershad quoted "non-interference in each other's internal affairs, respect to territorial integrity and sovereignty, peaceful coexistence and mutual cooperation."

The Indian Foreign Secretary hoped that the 28th JRC meeting in Dhaka would make some headway in solving the Ganges water issue. He said that the two sides would continue their efforts to find out a mutually acceptable solution to the question of augmentation and sharing of the Ganges water on which the two countries had widely different stand.

Asked when the "mutually acceptable solution" could be reached on the Ganges issue, the Indian Foreign Minister replied: "I am an optimist". He agreed with a questioner that cooperation could not be developed by keeping the outstanding issues unresolved.

'Travelling Letter'

Mr. Bhandari said that he had conveyed the greetings and good wishes and the desire of Prime Minister Rajib Gandhi to President Ershad. "I am taking back the reciprocation of the similar sentiment from President Ershad for my Prime Minister" he added. The Indian Foreign Secretary said that he himself was a "travelling letter" when asked whether he was carrying any letter from the Indian Prime Minister for President Ershad.

On the Tin Bigha issue, the Indian Foreign Secretary said that he had reiterated his country's commitment to expedite the old agreement on it. A monitoring centre was set up in Calcutta to implement the agreement, he informed.

In the talks, the Indian side referred to their problems about some construction on the Muhuri river and Mr Bhandari added, the JRC Committee would meet shortly to sort out the issue.

Asked whether they discussed the South Talpatti issue, the Indian Foreign Secretary replied in the affirmative. He however, informed "We did not go deep into it". Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Mr Faruque A Chowdhury was sitting beside the Indian Foreign Secretary at the Press conference. In reply to a question whether the agreed joint survey of South Talpatti would be complete soon Mr. Bhandari said "We are dealing with it".

The Indian Foreign Secretary told newsmen that a summit meeting was always desirable to solve the outstanding issues. But preparations are needed for the summit he observed. He mentioned about the visit of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to Dhaka by the end of this year in connection with the summit of the South Asia Regional Cooperation (SARC).

Mr Bhandari informed that the ministerial-level meeting of the Indo-Bangladesh Joint Economic Commission would be held in near future to further the economic cooperation. "The date will be fixed up soon" he said.

Jamdani Import

The Indian Foreign Secretary said that he would take up the issue of Indian import of Jamdani saree and jute carpets from Bangladesh. He observed that avoidance of double taxation would facilitate joint ventures and economic cooperation between the two countries.

The Indian Foreign Secretary said that the absence of better communication links between the two neighbours was acting as an inhibiting factor. He also stressed the need for further cultural exchange between the two countries.

Asked to comment on the present level of Indo-Bangladesh relations, the Indian Foreign Secretary said: "Our relations are historical and unique and it had ups and downs". He considered that his visit to Dhaka "served its purpose in its own limited way". He said that one meeting was not enough to solve all the outstanding problems.

The Indian Foreign Secretary said that during his 26-hour visit to Dhaka he called on President Ershad, Deputy Chief Martial Law Administrators Rear Admiral Sultan Ahmed and Air Vice Marshal Sultan Mahmood Home Minister Advisers on Foreign Affairs and Finance Ministry and Irrigation Secretary. "All these meetings were useful and constructive" he added. He also informed that in his talks with his counterpart Mr Faruque A Chowdhury they discussed bilateral aspects and exchanged views on major international issues.

Mr Bhandari was seen off at the airport by Mr Faruque Chowdhury other senior officials of the Foreign Ministry and Mr I P Khosla, Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh.

Foreign Office Official

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 17 Apr 85 p 1

[Text] There has been a perceptible shift in the Indian attitude towards some of the burning bilateral issues confronting India and Bangladesh.

This is how a senior official of the Bangladesh Foreign Office described the outcome of the Secretary level meeting between Bangladesh and India held in Dhaka on Monday and Tuesday.

He said India had persistently refused to discuss the border fence dispute saying there was no scope of a dialogue on the question. The Indian side not only laid their views on the table but also heard the Bangladesh point of view.

On the question of the sharing of the Ganges water India had so long remained evasive and even did not respond to the letter written by Bangladesh Irrigation Minister seeking extension of the Ganges water sharing arrangement.

India has now agreed to the holding of the JRC meeting sometime in May after the end of the Lok Shava session. This will be the 28th session of the JRC.

The Indian Foreign Secretary, firmly committed himself during his talks with Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Mr Faruq Ahmed Chowdhury that an expeditious solution to the Tin Bigha dispute would be made. A monitoring mechanism would be evolved to keep abreast of the developments.

CSO: 4600/1564

BANGLADESH

FINLAND FOR EXPANDED RELATIONS WITH BANGLADESH

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH TIMES in English 19 Apr 85 pp 1, 8

[Text]

Finland is keen to "enlarge its development cooperation programmes" in Bangladesh and develop greater bilateral trade and economic relations. Mr. Par Stenback, leader of a five-member Finnish parliamentary delegation said in Dhaka on Thursday.

Dhaka-Helsinki relations, Mr. Stenback said, "So far limited purely to technical cooperations" should now be enlarged and diversified into wider areas.

He told BSS in an exclusive interview in Dhaka on Thursday at the end of a four-day "goodwill and fact finding visit," the first of its kind from Finland that Bangladesh "already has a specific position in our development cooperation programmes."

"We have now reached a stage that this should be lifted to a political level," Mr. Stenback, who is also Vice-Chairman of the Finnish Foreign Affairs Committee, said.

He traced back bilateral relations between his country and Bangladesh since the early 1970s when Dhaka became a major recipient of Finnish development assistance.

"We are slowly enlarging our overseas aid programmes" which the Finnish parliamentarian said would be largely directed towards the Least Developed Countries (LDC).

He said Bangladesh would remain high on a list of "priority countries" to receive Finnish technical and economic assistance.

Finland has so far been participating in two main projects in Bangladesh — one in the rural electrification sector and the other in developing container handling facilities in the Chittagong Port.

But Mr Stenback said that his Government was expected to take up a "new but very important" project in the telecommunications sector in Bangladesh under which about 165 upazilas of the country would come under modern telecommunications system.

He said talks are being finalised for this rural telecommunications project for which Finland would provide UHF (ultra high frequency) radio links for connecting 165 upazila headquarters with the capital Dhaka.

The rural telecommunications project, he said, is expected to be taken up for implementation from this year (1985) for which experts and equipment would start to arrive from Finland very soon.

Finland imports a very small quantity of jute and jute products from Bangladesh and exports few commodities like electrical equipment and appliances.

Mr Stenback said that there was a lot of similarities between "our two countries. While Bangladesh is a non-aligned nation Finland is a neutral country."

BANGLADESH

DHAKA DELEGATED ADDRESSES MEETING ON NAMIBIA

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 21 Apr 85 pp 1, 8

[Text]

NEW DELHI Apr. 20:—Bangladesh today strongly condemned the continuing attempts of the racist regime of South Africa to impose puppet political institutions and an internal settlement in Namibia in violation of the relevant United Nations Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, reports BSS.

Addressing the plenary session of the Non-aligned Coordinating Bureau on Namibia here on the second day today the Adviser for Foreign Affairs Mr. Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury, appealed to the Non-aligned member states to apply sanctions unilaterally and collectively so as to comply with the boycott of South Africa called by the General Assembly. He also called upon the member states in particular to comply fully with the arms embargo against Pretoria regime in accordance with the Security Council resolution.

The international community, the Bangladesh Adviser said, can no longer remain indifferent to all the inhuman crimes being perpetrated by the racist Pretoria regime. Nor can we remain mute spectators to the endless travail and trauma suffered by the Namibia people, he said.

The Adviser told the galaxy of delegates including Foreign Ministers of about 80 Non-aligned countries that the struggle of the people of Namibia had reached a crucial point in history. In the name of that people whose rights have been trodden underfoot and whose land has been laid waste, the perpetrators and usurpers must be called to account by the international community, he stressed.

Mr. Chowdhury pleaded that the Non-aligned Bureau on Namibia must "proceed urgently" with all its authority at its command and all the resources at its disposal to bring about the dawn of Namibian independence. He reiterated Bangladesh's position that the relevant Security Council resolutions of 1976 and 1978 "constitute the only viable basis" for peaceful transition of Namibia from colonial subjugation to independence.

The Adviser also reaffirmed that the two resolutions be implemented immediately without modification or amendment or the introduction of extraneous and irrelevant issues such as "linkage" insisted upon by the racist regime in Pretoria.

The Adviser referred to the statement made by President Lt. Gen. H.M. Ershad during the Non-aligned summit in Delhi two years ago and said "Bangladesh is irrevocably committed to the cause of the oppressed people of Namibia and South Africa".

He referred to Bangladesh's association with the United Nations Council for Namibia and said "we deeply value the trust and confidence reposed in us for assisting and facilitating the work" of the UN special representative. He reassured that Bangladesh would continue to promote the cause of Namibia as member of the UN Council for Namibia.

About the latest move by South Africa to install an internal government in Namibia bypassing the demands and wishes of the international community and the Namibian people represented by the SWAPO, Mr. Chowdhury pointed out that "the move was illegal and merits only our total and outright rejection".

BANGLADESH

REPORTAGE ON VISIT OF YASIR 'ARAFAT TO DHAKA

'Red Carpet' Welcome

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 23 Apr 85 pp 1, 8

[Text] The President and Chief Martial Law Administrator Lt Gen. H. M. Ershad called on the PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat at the State Guest House in Dhaka on Monday evening reports BSS.

The remained together for some time.

Both the leaders, also met the Palestinian students and nationals living in Bangladesh at the guest house premises.

The gathering of the Palestinian students and nationals greeted President Ershad and Chairman Yasser Arafat with applause and clappings.

Speaking brief on the occasion President Ershad reiterated Bangladesh's unequivocal support to the palestinian people of their inalienable right to have a separate and independent homeland of their own in Palestine. He said, "Bangladesh is always with the cause of the Palestinian people in your just struggle. Our people have shed blood for the cause of the Palestine people and will always be with their brother for establishing their cause."

President Ershad praised the leadership of Chariman Yasser Arafat saying "we are proud to receive him in our midst. Chairman Arafat is not only our brother, but a respected personality among our people who has been fighting for a cause of the Palestinian people."

Reciprocating the sentiments of his host Mr. Yasser Arafat thanked President Ershad and the people of Bangladesh for the unstinted support they have been extending to the right cause of the Palestinian people. He said many a Bangladesh citizen have not only been fighting along side their Palestinian brothers but also met martyrdom for the cause.

President Ershad remained with his honoured guest as the later talked to his nationals informally.

The Information Minister Mr. A. R. Yousuf who is Minister-in-Waiting was present on the occasion.

Earlier report adds:--The Chairman of Palestine Liberation Organisation Mr Yasser Arafat was accorded a red carpet welcome when he arrived in Dhaka from Bhutan shortly after mid-day on Monday on a two-day state visit to Bangladesh reports BSS.

The President and Chief Martial Law Administrator, Lt. Gen. H. M. Ershad was the first to greet Mr Yasser Arafat who is also the General Commander of the Palestine Revolution Forces at the Zia International Airport.

The PLO leader was accompanied by Mr. Khalid al Sheikh, Member Palestine National Council and Ambassador in New Delhi and Mr Azzam al Ahmed Member Palestine National Council and Ambassador in Bang dad.

The special aircraft carrying the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat touched down the Zia International Airport at 12.35 p.m.

Fighter jets of Bangladesh Air force escorted the aircraft of the PLO chief as it entered the Bangladesh space.

As he alighted from his special jet plane a 21-gun salute boomed in the air.

The President and CMLA Lt. General H. M. Ershad was the first to receive Mr. Yasser Arafat

Two children presented bouquet to the PLO leader at the termac He affectionately patted them.

President Ershad conducted the distinguished guest to the specially erected rostrum from where the PLO leader took the salute as bands played the national anthems of Bangladesh and the PLO.

The PLO chief inspected the guard of honour presented by a contingent drawn from three services of the armed forces.

Two Deputy Chief Martial Law Administrators Rear Admiral Sultan Ahmad and Air-Vice Marshal Sultan Mahmud Cabinet Minister P.S.O.s to the CMLA ambassadors of the Arab countries and high ranking civil and military officials were introduced to Mr. Yasser Arafat.

The school children along the red carpet leading to the waiting presidential limousine waved multicoloured ribbons at the distinguished visitor who patted them.

The airport ceremony over Mr Yasser Arafat accompanied by President Ershad drove in a motorcade fro the Rastryio Athithi Bhaban (State Guest House).

The motorcade passed through the 12-mile long route decorated with buntings and festoons welcoming the visit of the PLO chief Full-size portraits of Yasser Arafat at various points were on display. The road island were also tastefully decorated with the national flags of Bangladesh and PLO. This is Mr Arafat's third visit to Bangladesh.

Visits Museum

The PLO Chairman Mr Yasser Arafat went to the Dhaka Museum in the afternoon.

Mr Arafat was shown different sections of the museum. The PLO chief expressed his keen interests in the exhibits at the museum particularly, the photographs on Bangladesh's Liberation War.

Mr Arafat was accompanied by minister-in-waiting Mr A. R. Yusuf.

Deputy Chief Martial Law Administrators Rear Admiral Sultan Ahmed and Air Vice Marshal Sultan Mahmud separately called on the PLO Chairman Mr Yasser Arafat at the State Guest House on Monday evening.

They discussed matters of mutual interests.

Report on Luncheon

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 24 Apr 85 pp 1, 8

[Text] PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat on Tuesday expressed his firm confidence that victory would be the ultimate result of the just struggle of the Palestinian people, reports BSS.

"This is the natural course of history and history has shown us that just struggle of nation is always victorious", he observed.

Mr Arafat was speaking at the state luncheon arranged in his honour by his host President Ershad at Bangobhaban in Dhaka on Tuesday.

Chairman Arafat expressed his profound appreciation on behalf of PLO and the Palestinian people for the support the government and people of Bangladesh have been extending towards the Palestinian cause.

He appreciated Bangladesh's support to the people's struggle of Palestine in different fields and international forums upholding the just cause and struggle of his people to restore their legitimate rights for self-determination and establishment of an independent Palestinian state "on our own soil" with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

Chairman Arafat mentioned about "heroic people from Bangladesh" who shed their blood with their Palestinian brothers in many heroic battles in Palestine and Lebanon and said "we highly appreciate this constructive co-operation between us in different fields in the Non-aligned Movement and the positive efforts of Bangladesh in the work of the committee of eight on Palestine."

He said in the occupied area events have proved and despite all eventualities that PLO-the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people is a main effective force in the Middle East formula due to the firm stance of the Palestinian militants and coherence of the Palestinian people and the support extended to it and to its leader ship This position is the development

effected by the support rendered by the freedom loving peoples he said adding: The support of President Ershad and the courageous people of Bangladesh also form a solid base on which "our people and militants" depend.

In this context the PLO Chairman reaffirmed that while waging a hard and continuous struggle to restore the rights, the Palestinian people would continue their efforts to reach a just and durable solution in the Middle East and for the Palestinian cause the efforts has been directed through "our accord with King Hussein of Jordan and through international conference with the participation of all the permanent member states in the Security Council and all the concerned parties, including the PLO on equal footing.

Speaking about the present stage of Palestine movement, Mr. Arafat said the Palestinian revolution passes currently difficult circumstances The Israeli terrorism is being escalated using extreme means of oppression, terrorism and racial discrimination against our steadfast people in the face of the Israeli occupation.

He said the crimes of our enemy went to the extreme and included confiscation of land robbing the water resources, and launching aggression against our holy shrines through continuous process of Judaization of our holy shrines in Palestine and the attempts to set Al-Aqsa mosque on fire and extend control over Al-Haram Al-Ibrahimi in the occupied city of Hebron. This is in addition to the continuous measure of destruction of villages and vital establishments closing universities and schools in the occupied homeland and many other crimes exercised against our people in the occupied territories and exposed by the international agencies, he said.

The PLO Chairman said in Lebanon, our refugee camps in the South in Tyre are subjected with their Lebanese brothers in villages and towns, to continuous destruction and acts of atrocities and murder by the invading Israeli army.

Israel Must Vacate Held Land: Ershad

BSS adds:--President Lt General H M. Ershad on Tuesday expressed Bangladesh's great concern over the continuing crisis in the West Asia and strongly demanded that Israel must vacate immediately all occupied Arab territories and restore Al-Quds Al-Sharif to its rightful sovereignty

He was speaking at the state luncheon hosted by him in honour of Mr Yasser Arafat Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation at the Bangobhaban in Dhaka.

Those who attended the luncheon were: two DCMLAs, Rear Admiral Sultan Ahmed and Air Vice Marshal Sultan Mahmud former President Justice Ahsanuddin Chowdhury, Cabinet Ministers diplomats, P S. Os of the Armed Forces, editors of the national dailies and news agencies high ranking civil and military officials, members of entourage of the PLO Chairman and elite.

President Ershad reaffirmed Bangladesh's total and unequivocal support for the Palestinian brethren and their sole and legitimate representative, the PLO, in securing their inalienable rights for a homeland of their own.

"We sincerely hope that this vital and central issue is resolved soon by arriving at a comprehensive settlement in which the interest of Palestine brethren are fully safeguarded" President Ershad said.

In this context he also referred to the situation in Lebanon and said that Bangladesh supported all measures aimed at upholding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon and hope that the Lebanese people will be able to find solution to the various complex problems they were currently beset with.

Speaking about other international issues, the Bangladesh President described the Iran-Iraq war as a "profound tragedy and an open wound" in the body politic of Muslim ummah and said that this wound must be healed without delay not only in the interest of the people of two fraternal countries but for the sake of consolidating unity and integrity of this Islamic ummah itself.

He referred to the peace process undertaken by OIC peace mission as well as by various other quarters and fervently hoped that all these would help in bringing about peace between two Muslim countries. "Bangladesh has always remained totally committed as a member of OIC and also the Non-aligned Movement to contribute in what ever way it is possible to work relentlessly towards this end" the President said about Dhaka's policy in this regard.

President Ershad turned to the South Asia region to which Bangladesh belongs, and said that seven countries in the region were now engaged in promoting new areas of cooperation through a framework of regional cooperation.

The Bangladesh head of state also touched the Namibian issue and expressed the confidence that Namibian people would and must obtain their independence immediately.

Airport Press Conference

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 24 Apr 85 pp 1, 8

[Text] PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat who left Dhaka on Tuesday after a two-day state visit to Bangladesh declared that the Palestinians were determined to continue their movement till the liberation of Palestine and the holy Al-Aqsa.

Addressing a crowded Press conference at the VVIP lounge at Zia International Airport the PLO chief asserted that there could be "no settlement and no peace" without the establishment of the PLO's right to self-determination and an independent homeland

Asked how far the PLO was from the final victory Chairman Yasser Arafat said "our people are approaching Jerusalem". Turning to his host President Ershad who was standing beside him the PLO Chairman exuded confidence in saying "sooner or later we will pray in Jerusalem together with our brother (Ershad)".

Talking about the present stage of the PLO struggle Chairman Arafat said since the Israeli war in Lebanon PLO had become the most important factor for Middle East peace He said that in Beirut Israelis wanted to liquidate PLO and kill Arafat but "we have succeeded to push them to withdraw

Referring to the fierce resistance PLO gave to the Israeli Occupation Army in Lebanon he said "we had a lot of casualties but we are destined to wrest our freedom". He said that in the past Moshe Dayan and Sharon used to claim themselves as heroes of Israeli Army operations but there is none now who can claim himself hero of the Israeli occupation in Lebanon. PLO succeeded in Lebanon, but where are Begin and Sharon now

Reciting an Arabic verse which was translated in English by his aide as "when darkness deepens dawn approaches" the PLO Chairman said that nothing could destroy PLO and they would be victorious.

Asked the shift in PLO's policy of moderation towards Jordan and Egypt is meant as its softening of attitude towards the United States the PLO Chairman said that the US policy was based on "three nos--no to PLO, no to an independent Palestine and no to the proposal to hold an international conference on Palestine".

In reply to a question the PLO Chairman said that the proposal for Palestinian-Jordanian confederation had been approved by the Palestinian National Council (PNC). He scoffed at the news on Salah Khalaf, his number two in Al Fatah for siding with radicals on the question of confederation as "rumours spread by the estern media".

Referring to the Committee of Eight on Palestine of the Non-Aligned Movement which met in New Delhi during the just concluded Non-aligned Bureau Conference there the PLO Chairman said "we put forward important agenda and programme for our next move and the meeting took some important decisions to implement the programme"

Expressing his deep appreciation over Bangladesh's unstinted support to the just cause of the Palestinians and the Muslims to liberate Jerusalem and the holy Al-Aqsa Mosque Mr. Yasser Arafat described Dhaka-PLO relations as "more deeper and stronger than diplomatic formalities".

The PLO Chairman recalled the heroic struggle of the brotherly people of Bangladesh "with whom I fought in many battlefields in Lebanon" He said that the Palestinians would continue to remember with gratitude the "heroic martyrs from Bangladesh who fought the Jihad with us from the same trench".

'Hearty Sendoff'

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 24 Apr 85 pp 1, 8

[Text] PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat was given a hearty send-off when he left Dhaka on Tuesday after noon concluding a two-day state visit to Bangladesh.

President Lt. Gen. H. M. Ershad bade him farewell at the Zia International Airport.

Also present were DCMLAs Rear Admiral Sultan Ahmed and Air Vice Marshal Sultan Mahmud Ministers members of diplomatic missions and high civil military officials.

Chairman Arafat was given a guard of honour by a contingent drawn from the three services as the national anthems of Bangladesh and PLO were played.

A 21-gun salute boomed in the air in honour of the distinguished guest.

School children gathered at the tarmac waved multicolour ribbons to the PLO Chief who reciprocated the feelings and waved back to them.

Four jets of Bangladesh Air Force escorted the aircraft carrying the PLO leader across Bangladesh air space.

CSO: 4600/1569

10 June 1985

BANGLADESH

CURRENT ANNUAL GROWTH RATE LOWER THAN ESTIMATE

Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English 9 Apr 85 pp 1, 8

[Article by Syed Badiuzzaman]

[Text]

A 3.8 percent growth rate of the national economy has been finally estimated by the planners and financial experts as against over 6 percent envisaged for the current financial year.

In an aid memorandum just prepared for the Paris Consortium meeting scheduled for May 9 and 10, it has been mentioned that the "economy experienced a severe jolt attributed to external shocks arising from prolonged global recession and frequent failure of food and other agricultural crops."

On the basis of the findings over the past few years and the potential of the economy, the gross domestic product (GDP) for the next financial year (1985-86) has been envisaged at 5.5 percent-agriculture growing by 5.5 percent and manufacturing sector by 7.5 percent, the memorandum says.

In 1983-84, the actual achievement of the GDP was 4.2 percent against an ambitious projection of more than 7 percent. The projected growth of agriculture by 5.5 percent in 1985-86 assumes normal weather and is based on expanded programme for inputs and extension services and continuation of output support price for major crops.

The aid memorandum mentions, the foodgrains output is

planned to increase by 4.4 percent to 16.5 million tons from 15.8 million tons in 1984-85 while the production of jute is estimated to rise to 5.8 million bales from 4.9 million bales in the current year.

"The higher output of jute will meet domestic as well as external demands and help build up the year end stock. Increased production has also been envisaged for cash and other minor crops as well as fishery, livestock and forestry products."

Stimulated demand due to the recovery of agriculture and further improvement in international trade will lead to higher capacity utilization in the manufacturing sector while higher productions have been envisaged for jute goods, cotton textiles, fertilizer, steel, sugar, cement etc.

The memorandum further points out that most of industrial growth will originate from local raw material based industries such as jute, fertilizer, sugar, cigarettes, matches etc. output of jute goods will increase from 580 thousand tons in 1984-85 to 600 thousand tons next year fertilizer from 320 thousand tons and sugar from 90 thousand to 160 thousand tons.

CSO: 4600/1561

BANGLADESH

PROCLAMATION ESTABLISHES RETIREMENT AGE FOR CHIEF JUSTICE

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 7 Apr 85 p 1

[Text]

The Chief Justice of Bangladesh Supreme Court will now be able to continue in office till he attains the age of 62. The Chief Martial Law Administrator by a proclamation order issued on March 27 last repealed the provision which entitled the Chief Justice of Supreme Court to hold office for a tenure of three years.

The provision of the tenure of the office of the Chief Justice of Supreme Court was provided under a Martial Law proclamation order promulgated on April 11, 1982.

The Clause 10 (1) of Martial Law Proclamation Order Number 1 of 1982 provides: "The remuneration privileges and other terms and conditions of service of a person appointed to or holding or acting in any office in Paragraph 3, 6, 7 and 9 shall until varied by the CMLA be those appertaining to the persons holding or, as the case may be, acting in the office in question immediately before the proclamation: provided that the Chief Justice of Bangladesh whether appointed before or after the proclamation, shall unless he sooner attains the age of 62 years hold office for a term of three years and shall thereafter, retire from his office and receive the pension to which he would have been entitled if he had retired from office on attaining the age of 62 years."

The Martial Law proclamation issued by the CMLA on March 27 has repealed the proviso part of the proclamation order of 1982.

Past recalled

The Supreme Court of Bangladesh was constituted as per Article 94 of the Bangladesh Constitution adopted in the Constituent Assembly in November 1972. Before that since the day of liberation on December 16, 1971 till November, 1972 Justice A S M Sayem was appointed as the Chief Justice of High Court. After the liberation the High Court which used to function in

erstwhile East Pakistan was given the status as the highest seat of Judiciary under a Presidential Order No. 5 of 1972.

Justice Sayem continued to hold the office of Chief Justice of the Supreme Court when it was constituted in 1972. The retirement age set for a Chief Justice of Supreme Court was 62 years. Before completing his terms as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Justice Sayem became the President in November 1975. Syed A B M Mahmud Hossain was appointed the Chief Justice of Supreme Court.

During his tenure the Supreme Court was divided into two parts, the High Court and the Supreme Court under a Martial Law proclamation by President and CMLA Sayem. And the retirement age for the judges of High Court remained at 62 years while the retirement age for the judges of Supreme Court was set at 65 years. This was done under the Martial Law Proclamation Order of 1976 (Seventh Amendment Order 1976).

Again under the promulgation of a Second Proclamation Order (10th Amendment Order) of 1977 the Supreme Court and the High Court were reverted back to their previous status as provided in the 1972 Constitution and the retirement age for all the judges was fixed at 62 years. About one and a half years later since this measure was taken Justice Mahmud Hossain retired and Justice Kemaluddin Hossain was appointed Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in 1978. Justice Kemaluddin retired when the provision for three years of tenure of the office of the Chief Justice was made under the Martial Law Proclamation Order issued on April 11, 1982. On the retirement of Justice Kemaluddin Hossain the government appointed the present Chief Justice of Supreme Court Justice F K M Abdul Munim who was due to retire on April 10 next after the expiry of three years tenure which provision now stands abolished.

IRAN

TEHRAN COMMENTARY CRITICIZES 'TWO-FACED' BRITISH POLICY

LD141512 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1105 GMT 14 May 85

[Text] Here is today's political commentary:

Yesterday, an Arab delegation led by Chadli Klibi, the secretary general of the Arab League, arrived in London in line with that League's efforts to persuade the Islamic Republic to agree to a compromise and to end the imposed war. According to the latest reports, members of the delegation met with Thatcher, the British prime minister, and asked her to take a more active part in the current efforts to establish a ceasefire and end the war. Also, it was decided that members of the delegation should meet other officials of that country including Geoffrey Howe, the foreign minister. Then they will visit four other permanent member countries of the Security Council. It is noteworthy that the formation of this delegation dates back to the end of the year 1362 [21 March 1983-21 March 84] and the Islamic Republic's victory in Khaybar operations, which resulted in the liberation of Majnun islands.

All previous efforts of this delegation which were completely in line with the decisions made at the Arab League Foreign Ministers Conference held in Baghdad and aimed at pressuring the Islamic Republic of Iran, have failed. Of these unsuccessful efforts, one can mention the delegation's trips to a number of countries with which Iran has trade relations, asking them to stop their economic ties with the Islamic Republic. On the other hand, news reports indicate that intensified attacks by Iraq on commercial ships in the Persian Gulf and lack of security on wider scales in waterways have been brought about by the decisions made by the said conference. The fact that the Iraqi regime's minister of foreign affairs is a member of this delegation is in itself indicative of the support and extensive backing provided by the delegation for Saddam's regime. At the same time, it seems that a review of Britain's stance and position with regards to the imposed war would, to a large extent, clarify the uselessness of such efforts.

Britain is one of the permanent members of the Security Council which has, seemingly, adopted a neutral stance towards the war. But, considering the fact that Britain enjoys the veto right at the said council and that

the policy adopted by the Security Council all through the imposed war has lacked realism and, in effect, it served to strengthen the position of Saddam's regime, one can realize the two-faced nature of the British Government.

In dealing with the public opinion and in its relations with the two sides of the war, Britain has in fact only pretended to be neutral. At the same time, because of being a part of the world oppression, whose interests would have been threatened if Iraq were to suffer a defeat, it has taken stances which serve to weaken the Islamic Republic of Iran and prevent the victory of the combatants of Islam. Evidence for this statement is Britain's refusal to overtly condemn Saddam's regime for attacking commercial ships, which is in obvious violation of international regulations. Naturally, few observers would expect the Government of Britain, which guards the interests of a part of world capitalism including the Lloyds Insurance Company, to take such a step. In addition, one could mention other economic aid in the form of credit put at the disposal of the bankrupt economy of Iraq.

As the Islamic Republic of Iran has repeatedly stated in the past, only efforts of a realistic nature can be helpful in putting an end to the imposed war. Naturally, such realism can be proven when it is, clearly and without any ulterior motive, followed by a condemnation of the war crimes committed by Saddam's regime. In this respect, the courageous combatants of Islam, fully appreciating their victorious operations, have for long proven that business-orientated and sly efforts and moves would not only fail to help maintain Saddam's regime, rather they would ultimately serve to annihilate that regime.

CSO: 4640/561

IRAN

MUSLIM WOMEN VOICE SUPPORT FOR HIJAB

Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 27 Apr 85 p 1

[Text]

TEHRAN (IRNA) — A large group of Moslem women issued a communique at the end of a one-day gathering at the Azadi Stadium here Thursday voicing support for the mode of outdoor dressing for women as prescribed by Islam. They also demanded a struggle with all symptoms of the values of the Western culture and Westernism.

In his speech to the group of the gathering women at the stadium Ayatollah Javadi Amoli said that Iran's Moslem women should look to Fate-meh Zahra (AS) the noblest of all women in the history of Islam and in as much as possible try to become like her in their lives.

Elsewhere during the gathering head of the Basij Forces of the Islamic Revolution's Guards Corps Hojjatolislam Mohammad Ali Rahmani reminded the group of the women of foreign conspiracies for introducing un-Islamic values in the Islamic Republic and for undermining the people's religious beliefs with the idea of paving the way for their return to Iran.

He said the colonialists seek to brainwash the masses in order to ensure a firm footstep for themselves in the countries of their choice, and added that any form of corruption is against the will of Iran's Moslem women.

IRAN

OPPOSITION PAPER PORTRAYS GRIM PICTURE OF COUNTRY

Paris QIYAM-E IRAN in Persian 26 Apr 85 pp 1, 6, 8

[Paris QIYAM-E IRAN biweekly in Persian; publisher Mehra'in]

[Text] In one of his recent speeches, Mr Khomeyni said: "A small wave has appeared here; but there is talk about it in the East and the West; there are discussions. Iran is now talked about everywhere."

It would be better for Mr Khomeyni to do Iranians a favor and forget about the word "Iran." Once every few months the name of Iran is uttered by Mr Khomeyni, and his supporters and cohorts do not like the word "Iran." We know that from their point of view, country and homeland are meaningless terms. We know that if they had had a more open hand, they would have destroyed everything that is a reminder of the civilization and culture of Iran and proof of the independent identity of the Iranian nation. Then it would be better that in the same way that they banned the word "national" and consider nationalism to be sacrilegious, they would also omit the term "Iran" from their common lexicon. Let them speak as much as they want of the community, guardianship, religious jurisprudence, martyrdom, self-sacrifice, oppression, the downtrodden, and strata and not speak about "Iran."

Mr Khomeyni said: Now Iran is talked about everywhere. It must be said that it is most unfortunate that Iran is talked about in such a form, that is to say, in such a form that the name has been sullied by the crimes of a non-Iranian even anti-Iranian government. Yes, Iran is talked about, but as a country in which the most heinous events of human history have occurred. Iran is talked about, but not as a land of the Aryans, the Persians and the Medes; not as the land of Cyrus and Darius; not as the birthplace of Avicenna, Razi, Hafez and Sa'di; not as a country in which one of the first human civilizations blossomed; not for the gardens of Shiraz, the pillars of Persepolis, the decorated buildings of Esfahan, the Bazaar of Tehran, the carpets of Kerman, the beautiful forests of Mazandaran and the turquoise waters of the Caspian Sea.

Iran is talked about as a country from whose doors and walls blood pours, as a base for the establishment of an anti-human government, a government whose ideals are summed up in death, destruction, ignorance, superstition, and opposition to the gains of modern civilization.

Iran is talked about as a country in which war is sanctified, violence is taught, and children are trained for terrorist operations; as a country in which mercy, pity, love and compassion have been forgotten; as a country in which the god of anger, wrath and hatred--the avenger of oppression--rules; as a country which has lost the way of wisdom.

Yes, Mr Khomeyni, you and your filthy, corrupt partners have made Iran talked about in the world in this form.

Iran is talked about everywhere. But what Iran? The war-stricken Iran, the famined Iran, the poverty-stricken Iran, the calamity-stricken Iran, the clergy-stricken Iran, the chaotic Iran, the bankrupt Iran, the Iran which is about to be eliminated, the Iran which is a captive of decadence, the Iran which suffers from ignorance and strangulation.

In the course of the six years since the establishment of the regime of the clerics, there have been many pictures of the Iran of today in the presses and televisions of the world. These pictures all show a true hell, a place in which no sign of law and order, justice and compassion remains; a place where only the voice of Satan is heard and everything is Satanic.

Iran is talked about everywhere. Everyone talks about Iran, a country which 30 years ago was a pioneer in nationalizing the oil industry in the Middle East and was the founder of partnership contracts, a country which could build a new civilization on the pillars of an old civilization by relying on its oil revenues and making use of its natural potential and educated and competent manpower and begin a new life. But now, the oil revenues are all spent on projects whose goal is to destabilize the region, continue political unrest and military conflicts, eliminate the ideas of development and progress, return to the life of the Middle Ages and, with large amounts of money, create an unmatched market for the purchase of arms and consumer goods.

We fight with the hope of reaching a day when Iran is not talked about in this way.

10,000
CSO: 4640/546

IRAN

EMIGRE PAPER VIEWS KHAMENE'I'S PRESIDENTIAL GOALS

GF121716 London KEYHAN in Persian 9 May 85 p 1

[Text] The chances for Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i's re-election are getting slimmer. According to our reports and remarks by informed sources, following the defection of Badri Khamene'i--sister of the Islamic Republic's president--to Iraq, Khamene'i's position has been severely damaged. Thus it is being said that Khamene'i has expressed his unwillingness to participate in the next presidential elections.

Informed experts in Tehran states that the defection of Khamene'i's sister which took place with the help of Majlis speaker, 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, was his way of dealing a mortal blow against his political foe in the Islamic Republic.

Hashemi-Rafsanjani and Khamene'i have been fighting over power and this battle turned them into enemies, the effects of which can be seen almost everywhere. Informed sources state that Hashemi-Rafsanjani wishes to replace Khamene'i with 'Ali Akbar Velayati. On the other hand, another faction is actively campaigning on behalf of Musavi-Kho'iniha, the leader of the student followers of the imam's line and the candidate of the extremists. In any case, the defection of Khamene'i's sister has badly damaged his position.

CSO: 4640/560

IRAN

NVOI CONDEMNS SUPPRESSION OF BALUCHIS BY CLERICAL REGIME

TA150503 (Clandestine) National Voice of Iran in Persian 1730 GMT 14 May 85

[Unattributed commentary: "The Islamic Regime's Collaboration and Cooperation With Monarchists Against Our Peoples"]

[Text] Dear compatriots: In connection with the antipeople and treacherous policies of Khomeyni's criminal regime toward all the peoples of Iran, including ethnic minorities living in our multinational country, and in view of the implementation of these policies, the organization of the Baluchi people's movement recently issued a statement.

Baluchestan is among the regions of our country in which the antipeople policies of ruling circles, whether during the previous regime or at present, are more tangible. As a result of such policies, poverty, unemployment, and illiteracy are wreaking havoc in this province. Shortage of drinking water [words indistinct], lack of medical and educational facilities cause premature death and contagious diseases. If we add these calamities stemming from the Islamic regime's treacherous policy to the gradual return of fugitive khans and monarchists--which is taking place with the approval of these treacherous rulers-- we can realize what difficult and inhuman conditions our Baluchi compatriots are facing.

The statement by the organization of the Baluchi people's movement stresses that rulers of the Islamic Republic have made contact with the region's fugitive monarchists--most of whom had escaped to Pakistan and some of the Persian Gulf's reactionary states and informed them that they could return to Baluchestan, under the protection of the Islamic Republic, and loot the people, as they did in the time of the deceased shah. The Islamic regime also promised these foes of the people that it would place at their disposal the necessary funds for the purchase of arms and recruitment of mercenaries.

The statement by the organization of the Baluchi people's movement adds that in continuing these efforts, the most notorious and hated political figures of the imperial era have established themselves along the Iran-Pakistan border strip, and are crossing in and out of Baluchestan. The aim is to organize antipeople forces and to indulge in propaganda. In

fact, there is some sort of competition between the monarchists and the Islamic Republic for the suppression of the freedom-seeking movement of the Baluchi people. Recently, several shipments of weapons reportedly arrived in Baluchestan from the reactionary governments of the Persian Gulf, and were placed at the disposal of the monarchists and their mercenaries. These efforts show that (?colonialism) and international imperialism, particularly America, are seriously concerned over the future of the national democratic movement in Baluchestan. This very concern is the cause of the movements and plots of regional reaction and the lackeys of America and other imperialists in the Persian Gulf.

This statement makes it very clear how the rulers of Khomeyni's extremely Islamic and anti-imperialist regime collaborate and cooperate with reactionary regimes, the imperialists, and even with the monarchists in suppressing every national democratic liberation movement. Our homeland's people have witnessed an example of such collaboration and cooperation between the Islamic regime and the militarists of Turkey's American regime for the suppression of the Kurdish people's struggles. Now the Islamic regime has also submitted to cooperation with the expelled foes of the people, regional reaction, and imperialist agents against the Baluchi people who, despite plots, persecution, and massacre, have risen in struggle (?against the regime).

In order to destroy the young generation and carry out national oppression in Baluchestan, authorities of Khomeyni's so-called regime of divine justice have embarked on the distribution of narcotic drugs at very low prices and even, in many cases, free of charge in this province. Moreover, Khomeyni's regime is continuing its barbaric onslaught with utmost intensity against progressive struggling forces in Baluchestan. Right now, thousands of the most noble children of Baluchestan's toilers are languishing in the Islamic regime's prisons on the charge of freedom-seeking and political struggle.

Khomeyni's Islamic regime, which has betrayed the revolution and Iran's working people, instead of yielding to the lawful and legitimate demands of our homeland's oppressed people, has resorted to bloodshed, cowardly onslaughts, and even to cooperation with reactionaries, monarchists, and imperialist agents. For this reason, unity within a united popular anti-imperialist front for the overthrow of Khomeyni's antipeople despotic regime, and the establishment of a national democratic system, is presently looming before the Iranian people, including ethnic and national minorities, as an urgent national patriotic duty.

CSO: 4640/562

IRAN

MUSAVI: DOMESTIC EXPERTS CAN MANAGE COMPLEX INDUSTRIES

Tehran SOBH-E AZADEGAN in Persian 6 Apr 85 p 2

[Text] Seyri, IRNA. In the presence of Engineer Mir Hoseyn Musavi, the prime minister, on God's day, 1 April, the anniversary of the establishment of the Islamic Republic, the Martyr Raja'i sea drilling rig began operation in the Persian Gulf.

Mr Mir Hoseyn Musavi, who was accompanied by Messers Mohammad Gharazai, the minister of petroleum; Agazadeh, deputy prime minister for executive affairs; Mohyeddin Fazel-Harandi, Esma'il Fada'i and Hemmati, representatives of the Majlis, after arriving Monday morning on Seyri Island to inspect the Martyr Raja'i sea drilling rig, visited the location of this equipment. At this location, after recitations from the Koran, first the engineering director of the Iranian continental shelf oil company presented a report on the situation of the Nosrat oil field, the Nosrat platform and the sea drilling equipment of Martyr Raja'i. Explaining the quality of the oil extracted from this field, he estimated the oil production capacity of this field at 37.3 million barrels and pointed out: The present planning is based on the creation of 3 developmental wells and the production of 15,000 barrels of oil daily. Then the prime minister inspected the Martyr Raja'i sea drilling rig, visiting various parts of this platform, including the derrick, the engine room, the electricity generators, the control room, the drilling rig, the pump room, the compressors, the Nosrat platform and one of the bases.

Referring to the equipment and oil facilities of the neighboring countries in the vicinity of this platform and their use of American and European experts, Mr Musavi said: You work today without any sense of need for foreign experts. This phenomenon shows very well the relationship of this complex to the Islamic revolution. In our country today, if we close our eyes to other phenomena and only take a good look at the phenomenon that we are witnessing and are involved in, by analyzing it, we realize the greatness of 1 April and the Islamic revolution. As a superpower

whose spy organization, tools, eyes, hands and capital have expanded all around the world and whose strong hand is over the head of all dominated nations, the United States is unable to impose its will on us. If we are able today to live proudly in the middle of the Persian Gulf near the NATO battleship without any fear and engage in construction to obtain our own wealth with the strong hands of our experts and workers, this is all due to the blessing of the Islamic revolution and in the wake of the general movement of the people which resulted in the victory of our nation on 11 February 1979.

The prime minister added: Once the complex equipment and technology of the West are introduced into the Third World, besides being a sudden, rootless phenomenon, they create economic and political symptoms. But they also have a very important cultural symptom, because usually the members of the Third World nations feel inferior with regard to such technology. Consider a nation that for numerous historical reasons is placed in a particular spot and sees drilling derricks appearing in his country.

Referring to the economic gains of this project, the prime minister said: Of course, this is a very important aspect, but more important is our nation's experts and oil company standing on their own feet, which is of high value. From the standpoint of material capability, often we may have been unable to design many of the parts, but what is important is that we have begun to gain familiarity. We are not afraid. We are getting closer to the power of this technology and as far as the economic and technological capability of our country allows, we will begin designing.

For this reason, the movement that has taken place here is precisely connected with all the movements we see, part of which is seen on the fronts and part in the resistance of the brave people of Khuzestan, Dezful, Ahvaz, Tehran, Esfahan and other cities, and these are by no means unrelated.

The prime minister also said: This revolution wants to be active in the waters of the Persian Gulf and does not by any means want to crawl inward and build a wall around itself. In the heart of the Persian Gulf, now that the U.S. ships no longer support us and we are instead supported by the people, we declare that we want to be engaged in economic activity and we want to display our creativity. This shows the interest of our nation in imposing its independent rule.

Now, one of the reasons for the obstinacy of the Saddam regime against us is that when we sent our powerful missiles to Baghdad, we said that this is a new phase in the war and that blow for blow will not end until our ships, our ports, and our cities are

no longer a target of attack by Saddam supporters. Naturally, this is an important issue to them.

In conclusion, the prime minister praised the efforts of the workers of the oil industry, wished them success and stressed: The government and the Majlis will strongly support any sort of constructive movement and we are prepared to show, in practice, this strong support in all areas.

This report indicates that during the stay of the prime minister and his companions at the Martyr Raja'i drilling rig, the battleships of the Navy of the Islamic Republic of Iran patrolled the surrounding waters.

It must be mentioned that the Martyr Raja'i sea drilling rig, at a weight of 8,900 tons and an area of about 1,500 square meters, is supported by 3 bases, each 380 feet in water, each of which move up and down with 18 electric motors.

The system of this drilling rig, which when full of water or other drilling loads weighs more than 11,000 tons, is fully electric, driven by 5 steam-driven motors of 1,250 horsepower, and is able to drill wells in the sea up to a depth of 20,000 feet. The derrick of the drilling rig is one of the strongest in existence and can hold 600 tons of weight. The safety methods for this rig, which uses foam, water and extinguishing gases, is the most perfect safety system. In addition, the residential part of the Martyr Raja'i drilling rig has the capacity of about 90 persons, who stay in one- to four-room units. Also, this equipment has two restaurants, one club, a kitchen, a prayer room, a health center and a helicopter landing pad.

It should be pointed out that this rig is portable and after the completion of work can be used in drilling new wells.

After returning from Seyri Island and performing the noon and afternoon prayer, he went to a gathering of the employees of the oil industry and spoke on such topics as the importance of 1 April, the struggle on the economic front, and the evil acts of the regime of Saddam.

Engineer Musavi first said: Before the victory of the revolution on 11 February, the agents of oppression in the country and the foreign mass media tried to relate this revolution to the Marxists. The only thing which was not mentioned was the Islamic nature of the revolution, whereas the people stood up in front of cannons and tanks for the sake of Islam and did not rest for a moment until they gained victory.

The prime minister then referred to the goal of the referendum for the Islamic Republic and said: In fact, if we had not had a

referendum, we could not offer any clear and strong proof for the policy of neither East nor West, [but] Islamic Republic. In fact, the essential basis for any policy that the regime of the Islamic Republic has devised in the past years is related to the referendum on 1 April 1979. Some said that this referendum was not necessary at all. Some spoke about a democratic Islamic Republic and some would omit Islamic from the Islamic Republic and would only keep Republic. We remember that in those days, articles were written, and in one of those articles, it was even proposed to the imam that if we wanted his name to remain as a spiritual leader of the world, such as Gandhi, he and the clerics must stay out of politics.

He said: All of these plans were eliminated on 1 April. It is true that we saw some sinister movements after 1 April 1979, but, because of 1 April, none of the minigroups could gain the necessary legitimacy.

Mr Musavi pointed out the movements that were made to return the dependent and tyrannical managers to the head of affairs, the freezing of the Iranian assets, and the economic embargo as other means of imposing pressure on the Islamic Republic.

Explaining the conspiracies of oppression against the revolution, the prime minister said: The inculcation of the idea that the forces, workers and experts of the revolution of this Islamic Republic are unable to operate the complex technology and show their management abilities is one of the conspiracies on which the oppressing powers had set their hopes highly.

In regards to the position of the Islamic Republic of Iran in connection with the imposed war of Iraq on Iran, the prime minister of our country said: We believe that every day this position must be explained. As soon as we keep silent, the mass media fabricates lies and tries to distort the position of our country. Or, if the clear positions are not frequently announced, they look for the weak points. The enemy attacked us in different cities, and in the past year, they tried to stop our oil exports. Your presence proves the falsity of Iraq's efforts in this area. Iraq began to strike our cities, thinking that it would be able to weaken us in this way and to drag us to a point of submission, as the imam said, to a peace which is worse than war, a peace which can be dangerous to the revolution, a peace which can give this wounded snake a chance to begin conspiring with the vast support of the oppressive powers, a peace which would create doubt in the world about the ideals and goals of the Islamic revolution.

He added: Iraq bombed the cities; we responded with missiles. Even if we did not have these missiles, it would be a false supposition for Saddam to rely on it.

In conclusion, Mr Musavi wished success for the employees of the oil industry. According to this report, after his speech, Mr Musavi, his companions and the commander of the seventh naval base inspected the Alvand battleship and became acquainted with the personnel of the force. At the end of his visit, the minister of our country left Seyri Island for Tehran at about 15:30.

10,000

CSO: 4640/552

IRAN

NEW INDUSTRIES CREATED IN FARS

Tehran BURS in Persian 22 Apr 85 p 8

[Text] With the issuance of permits for the establishment of 178 production and industrial units in Fars Province, last year more than 4,035,000,000 rials were invested by the private sector in the province, which provided jobs for about 2,000 workers and specialists. According to IRNA, the central office of industries of Fars Province has also announced its agreement in principle to the creation of another 186 production and industrial units in the cities and areas of the province during this period. These units will be created with 6,053,000,000 rials in investments and 2,240 workers and specialists will be absorbed by them. Also, last year, the central office of industries of the province issued operating permits for 106 production units in various areas and the experts of this central office inspected the newly built units or the locations for the creation of these units. This report also indicates that the new operating units in the province include the manufacture of cabinets, wooden and aluminum doors and windows, cardboard boxes, (bascules) and spinning wool, construction materials, nails, portable shelf workshops, cassette tapes, various washers for wooden office furniture, three-phase meter units, and feeding troughs and the production of meat and machine-made bread products, pumps and agricultural equipment, and other production, cellulose, chemical and metal activities.

10,000
CSO: 4640/554

IRAN

BANK MARKAZI ANNOUNCES INTEREST ON INVESTMENT DEPOSITS

Tehran BURS in Persian 22 Apr 85 p 8

[Text] The Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran announced that interest would be paid on long-term and short-term investment deposits. This announcement states: Now that, with the help of Almighty God, one year has passed since the successful implementation of interest-free banking, it is with great pleasure that we announce that the response of the general public to various new accounts has been very hopeful and exciting, and that the implementary results of the law, especially with the participation of the various strata of the people in controlling cash flow and modifying inflation pressures, have been quite positive. Since the valuable cooperation and support of the beloved compatriots and a proper form of compensation were necessary to achieve the objectives of the successful implementation of the law for interest-free banking, the general assembly of banks decided in Session 112 that, in gratitude for this significant reception and participation of the people, 7.2 percent interest will be paid from the revenues of the banking operations to those who have made short-term investment deposits in the banks of the country during the period 21 March 1984-20 March 1985 and 9 percent interest to those who have made long-term investment deposits. Another part of this announcement states: Obviously, the prizes of the interest-free accounts will be numerous and varied to enable large numbers of interest-free savings depositors to be able to benefit from such prizes more than ever before in addition to their spiritual rewards. In the new year as well, with the help of God and the effective support and participation of the public, this significant response will continue to enable the banking system to have the resources and ability to compensate properly the response of the people.

10,000
CSO: 4640/544

IRAN

VARIOUS PROJECTS UNDERWAY BY FOUNDATION FOR OPPRESSED

Tehran SOBH-E AZADEGAN in Persian 27 Apr 85 p 19

[Text] The industries division of the Foundation for the Oppressed has 16 new production projects underway in various provinces, with primary investments amounting to 10 billion rials.

Engineer Qa'edi, the supervisor of the industries division of the Foundation for the Oppressed, announced the above statement in an interview and added: Some of these units which will be operational this year and next year, consist of the apple and fruit juice concentrate project, with the creation of two factories, in Qazvin and Orumiyyeh; the livestock protein project in Lorestan, which has reached the stage of purchasing machinery; and the (UPAN) project or the project to make imitation porcelain dishware, which will be produced for the first time.

The project for the production of magnetic freight, polyethylene pipes for agricultural irrigation and natural gas, felt carpets in Kurdistan, the production of china dishes from kaolin in Qazvin, bricks in West Azarbaijan, center for washing lithopone, or the manufacture of powder for paint factories and several other production projects which will absorb one-third of the projected budget for the current year.

He mentioned the goals of the industries division of the Foundation, the increase in the volume of the production of essential goods, the export of domestic products, the strengthening of the fundamental services, economizing production costs in the industrial units by making proper use of them, the technical support for handicraft and rural industries, the change from the production of nonessential goods to the production of investment goods, the increase in the quality of products, the creation and expansion of the industrial and trade training units, the creation, expansion and encouragement of research activities on efficiency, and the use of the industrial resources of the oppressed areas of the country and said: For this purpose, the food and agriculture industries, mineral and

construction material production industries, machine and agricultural equipment industries, and chemical industries are given priority respectively.

The supervisor of the industries division of the Foundation for the Oppressed referred in another part of this interview to 226 industrial units under the auspices of the industries division of the Foundation and the effects of the loss of capital and managers of industries and said: Through planning and the efforts of its employees, the implementation of correct management, and avoiding administrative bureaucracy, the Foundation has succeeded in operating and repairing the destruction of the past and increasing the production of these units. In this area, the results of the statistics gathered in 111 production units show that production in this division during the period 21 March 1983-20 March 1984, at a value of 129 billion rials compared to the period 21 March 1982-20 March 1983, has shown a growth of 26 percent and during the period 21 March 1984-20 March 1985, with a production value of more than 35.1 billion rials, has shown a growth of 15 percent compared to the previous year. He also added: In the same number of workshops during the 1984-85 period, [the production value] was more than 65 billion rials, an increase of more than 20 percent compared to the 1983-84 period.

He mentioned the investments during the 1983-84 period in the industries of the Foundation towards the completion and expansion of its units to be 3 billion rials, and during the 1984-85 period, more than 5.1 billion rials, and said: These investments increased by 70 percent compared to the 1982-83 period. In addition, new projects began with 184 billion rials of investments during the 1984-85 period, which will be operational in the next 2 or 3 months.

Engineer Qa'edi also pointed out: The industries division of the Foundation, deriving income from the increase in production, has paid more than 7 billion rials of its 21-billion-rial debt to the banks of the country from the period 21 March 1982-20 March 1985 and has also paid 45 billion rials of the 52 billion rials in taxes to municipalities. Concerning the sale of factory shares to workers, he said: Fortunately, workers employed in the industries division of the Foundation are shareholders in most of the large factories and benefit yearly from the profits. If one day the government and the Majlis approve this issue, naturally, we will also welcome it.

In conclusion, concerning the role of the industries of the Foundation in the war, he said: The hard working and committed workers of the industries division of the Foundation for the Oppressed have been active in terms of manpower on the front lines of the front and have continuously given their cash and

non-cash aid in a significant way. Concerning production, too, we believe that all industries must serve the war and the experts and researchers must also put their experience and knowledge at the service of the war. The Foundation is also prepared to make the necessary investments to implement the war related projects.

10,000

CSO: 4640/554

IRAN

STUDENTS SENT ABROAD LIMITED TO THOSE WITH BACHELOR'S, ABOVE

Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 13 Apr 85 p 3

/Text/ KEYHAN political service. On Thursday, the Majlis held an open session.

In this session, after the preagenda speeches, several bills were examined and ratified, a report on which was published. Below is the detailed continuation of the report on the open session.

At 11 o'clock, the open session was reopened and continued studying the remaining articles of the bill on sending students abroad. Proposals on Art 3 were discussed, and Mehdi Purgol offered an amendment as a note to this article stating that one of the requirements should be that the potential student have at least a bachelor's. In the 1st year of the implementation of the law, 50 percent of the students sent by the ministry must hold a bachelor's, and in the following year, the quota of bachelors' must increase by 10 percent and the number of students with diplomas must decrease, so that by the 6th year of the implementation of the law, 100 percent of the students sent abroad will have at least a bachelor's.

Movahhedi-Savoji and Latif Sefri spoke as opponent and supporter of this proposal respectively and the speaker of the committee and the representative of the government offered explanations.

Then the proposal was put to a vote and was not ratified.

Then Ms Dastgheyb proposed an amendment to Note 1, stating that boys and girls with bachelor's and higher degrees who are married be given priority, with consideration for the other regulations stated in this law.

'Abd Khoda'i and Movahhedi-Savoji spoke in opposition and support of this proposal respectively and the spokesman of the committee offered explanations.

Then the proposal of Ms Dastgheyb was put to a vote and was not ratified.

Then Ms Behruzi offered the proposal to omit Note 1 of Article 3.

This proposal was put to a vote and was not ratified.

Then Article 3 was read, put to a vote, and ratified as follows.

Art 3. Sending male students who hold a bachelor's or higher degree will be based on the capacity of the universities of the country, the currency resources and the needed and very vital fields. Once a year, the ministry will determine these cases. In equivalent circumstances, priority will be given to married students with a bachelor's degree.

Note 1. Women with bachelor's and higher degrees who meet the other requirements of this law may only apply to study abroad if they are married and accompanied by their husband.

Note 2. In order to increase the admission capacity of universities, the Ministry of Plan and Budget is responsible for increasing the currency budget of the universities at an amount equal to that of the currency savings which are made as a result of this law. On this basis, the ministry, in addition to the budget for the expansion of universities, is responsible for spending an amount equal to that saved for the expansion of universities.

The open session concluded at 12:10 pm. The next session will be held tomorrow, Sunday, at 7:30 am.

Our parliamentary correspondent reports that in this session, one proposal and a question were received as follows:

1. Proposal to amend the law for the protection and expansion of Iranian industries.
2. A question by Sadr-Tabataba'i, representative of Yazd, to the minister of commerce concerning the reason for not issuing vouchers for and marketing of textile products.

10,000
CSO: 4640/524

IRAN

MAJLIS APPROVES PROVISIONS OF BILL ON SENDING STUDENTS ABROAD

Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 14 Apr 85 p 2

[Text] KEYHAN political service. The Majlis held an open session this morning. In this meeting, the representatives of Rudbaran, Bakhtaran, and Tehran were pre-agenda speakers.

The first pre-agenda speaker was Ebrahim Yusofi-Dashti, the representative of Rudbaran to the Majlis.

Referring to the enmity of Islam with oppression, its support for the oppressed and the downtrodden, and the hostility of the profiteers and tyrants towards Islam, he said: The effects of the shortsighted individuals and the unfounded claims of the officials have been no less than the plots and disruptions of the enemies.

In another part of his speech, he referred to the lives of the leaders at the dawn of Islam and their treatment of the people and said: The first Islamic leaders conformed their living conditions to those of the poor. Working in buildings with the equipment and tools that the previous tyrannical regime had provided in accordance with that culture has the danger that such ceremonies may gradually become normal and justified as tools of the trade. Why are the frequent warnings of the imam in this regard ignored?

He added: Another danger that may bring irreparable harm to the revolution is the manner of ideological and political struggle among the supporters of the revolution. Of course, it is a necessary and sacred task to identify the good and bad views and projects, but if sufficient attention is not paid to Islamic instructions in this area, the prestige of the revolution and faith in it will destabilize.

Problem of Electoral Zones

The representative of Rudbaran then spoke about the problems of his electoral zone and said: This area is one of the oppressed areas of the country; most of the year it faces drought, even in regards to drinking water. Thus far, no steps have been taken to build a dam to harness the winter waters in this region. Two deep wells have been dug in Ahran for the irrigation of orchards, but thus far, the officials of the province have been unable to manage and operate them and they have remained unused.

The farmers of one of the villages of the region have been in limbo for years as a result of differences with the office of religious endowments. Some of them have migrated and this problem has not been resolved yet. Many of the farmers have been disappointed in agriculture as a result of the differences with the forestry department. The region received electricity about two years ago, but two generators are left inoperative. However, the officials of the province are unable to start their operation and management. At the same time, in their interviews, they announced that electricity has been provided, but there is no electricity. Most villages do not have electricity, and recently electricity rates have become very expensive. Even if electricity is brought in, many of the villagers will be unable to obtain it. It is necessary for the concerned officials to reduce the cost of electricity for the villages of the warm and deprived region.

The establishment of a college in this province was ratified last year and the funds have also been provided. But no steps have been taken in this regard.

The government and the officials of the Ministry of the Interior have been reminded frequently that Bushehr needs stronger forces to overcome its problems. But these reminders have not achieved any results, and even some of the strong and competent forces have been dismissed.

In conclusion, he thanked the officials of the drought regions, fisheries, customs and commerce and expressed hope that the problems of fishermen, sailors, and border cooperatives will be solved in a correct manner.

Statements of Bakhtaran Representative

The second pre-agenda speaker today was Seyyed Jalil Seyyedzadeh, the representative of Bakhtaran. He said: Today, our Islamic country, Iran, stands more proudly than ever before against global oppression and defends the truth. It believes that truth will be victorious and falsehood will be eliminated.

Praising the resistance and steadfastness of the nation, he said: The dignity and firmness of the great nation of Iran under the leadership of the revered imam is such that today it has attracted the attention of the world. There are few gatherings and conferences held in the world which have not looked at Iran in a new light.

Continuing his statements, the representative of Bakhtaran referred to the actions of the United Nations and said: We have long known of the indecisiveness, silence and policies of the United Nations and know that the UN secretary general has sensed first hand the dignity and truthfulness of the statements of the officials of the Islamic Republic and knows that his action for a temporary peace, which is all for show, is fruitless. The United Nation knows that when Iran speaks of peace, it means an honorable peace and it will not submit to an imposed peace. The world must know that the Iranian nation, after 54 months of war, giving so many martyrs and wounded and suffering so much in damages, cannot give in. We have no hopes set on the United Nations. We rely on Almighty God.

Then he described the crimes of the United States in such places as Guatemala, El Salvador and Columbia, as well as the silence of the United Nations, and said: Does the United Nations not know that Reagan and those who think like him are choking humanity? Does it not know that in 1981 alone, 18 million children died because of the lack of security. Did the United Nations not recognize Israel as a country, despite its open violation of the UN Charter and the invasion of Palestine? And does the United Nations not see what crimes Saddam, this autocratic criminal, has committed in Iran? Who must answer for the frequent violations of the 1975 Algerian agreement, the 1925 Geneva agreement concerning the use of chemical weapons, the 12 June 1984 agreement, agreement 407 of 14 October 1983, resolution 409 of 8 November 1984, the Hague agreement concerning the protection of cultural monuments and property, and finally, the Chicago passenger plane safety convention, and dozens, even hundreds, of other violations?

People of Iraq, is it not time for you to tear apart your chains and cry out? Is it not time, as your human and Islamic mission, to break the silence and pour into the streets in order to be freed from the torture and domination of the infidel 'Aflaqi Party? I swear to God, if a group of you sit and listen to what those who have chosen to reside in darkness say about our revolution, you have chosen the wrong path. It is a mistake to expect a description of light from the blind.

Constituency

Explaining the problems of his constituency, he first referred to the strike of six missiles and bombs on the city of Bakhtaran and the resistance of the people of that city and said: Our people are impatiently awaiting the ultimate victory of the Islamic combatants.

In conclusion, he thanked all the officials and those who helped the war victims in Bakhtaran and asked the Office of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of the Interior, and other ministries to pay more attention to the needs of Bakhtaran under these sensitive circumstances.

Statements of the Representative of Tehran

The last pre-agenda speaker of today's session was Fakhroddin Hejazi, the representative of Tehran. This year's New Year holiday was one of blood and a bright juncture in Islamic history, which displayed the resistance of the people who struggle for the establishment of the government of monotheism and equity and stand up steadfastly with their wounded bodies. The world also realized and sensed that we do not compromise.

Hejazi added: We are not the kind of people who would compromise peace with an executioner, dependent functionary regime.

Then, addressing the Majlis representatives, he said: Fortunately, this Majlis has shown its maturity and genius and its revolutionary ideas and faith during this period. On New Year's Eve, 20 March 1985, more than two-thirds of the votes of this Majlis concerning the legislative notes were of great historical significance, about which future generations will talk.

But the revolution and the people still have great expectations of this Majlis. Before everyone else, the imam is waiting, and I can say that he has been waiting for a year. The nation, too, following the imam, is waiting to see the efforts of this revolutionary Majlis concerning the recommendations and instructions of the imam. Essentially, the purpose of the revolution is to support the oppressed, downtrodden, hungry and destitute classes and to fight against economic accumulation and corruption. The imam has said that we must resolve the problem of housing, which is a serious problem. The first Majlis ratified the urban land law, which was approved by the Council of Guardians and given to the government. But in its implementation, we see that problems have been created. For example, a piece of land valued at 160 million rials which was supposed to be distributed in accordance with the law has been returned to the original owner. These situations are serious in Tehran and they also exist in such places as Ahvaz, Chalus and

Babol. This problem must be studied in order to improve the condition of these destitute revolutionary people.

It is the duty of the Majlis to solve this problem. The problem must be resolved not only in the open sessions, but also in the committees and meetings with the officials of the executive and judicial branches.

Another problem concerns Article 49 of the Constitution, the law for which was ratified in the previous Majlis. But I have not yet heard of a piece of land, wealth or money being taken away from an illegitimate procurer and given to a destitute person.

Article 44 of the Constitution, too, is left as it was.

Another problem is the land law. Essentially, our level of agricultural production is low, because this problem has not been resolved.

We have hard-working, faithful farmers who lack land, and we have landowners who have thousands of hectares of land.

The purpose of the revolution is to attend to the oppressed and downtrodden classes. The imam emphasized that we must not act in a way that causes discontentment, because the counterrevolutionaries take advantage of such discontentment.

Involvement of Majlis in War Affairs

He then asked for the establishment of meetings between the officials of the three branches to solve this problem and said: Another problem is that the Majlis must be actively involved in the war. Ayatollah Montazeri asked why the Majlis is not sufficiently involved in the war. In fact, as the imam said, the Majlis is at the head of affairs. In this manner, we must continue our struggle more strongly by eliminating the mistakes, because the war is not a problem that can end, given the situation of the oppressors against us.

The Majlis must be actively involved in political affairs. It must be involved in these comings and goings, in the negotiations and relationships with other countries. I feel sorry that this hypocritical government of Yugoslavia, which has \$750 million in trade with us and profits so much from it, puts all of its newspapers, radio stations and televisions at the disposal of the Iraqi Ba'thists, in addition to the fact that Muslims in Yugoslavia are placed under so much pressure. We must study this issue. They have such relations with Iran and make such a profit, why do they place their media at the disposal of the enemy? The foreign affairs committee of the Majlis must be in

touch with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and coordinate their actions.

Addiction of the Young People

Continuing his statements, the representative of Tehran referred to the issue of the young people and their narcotic addiction and said: Two things threaten our young people and both are addictions. One is addiction to narcotics, which makes our young people ill and destroys our active forces. I say to the Supreme Judicial Council that this issue must be severely followed up; pressure must be imposed; and we must act decisively. Another problem is the addiction to ideas. According to the information that we have obtained, those who are the operators of Sufism in this country have had and still have relations with the Freemasons and colonialists. I am not saying what relations they have with foreigners now that they have left Iran for Pakistan. They are spreading Sufism and dervish cults in this country in order to remove the young people from the struggle and make them sit in seclusion. Most unfortunately, we see that this problem has spread to the mosques and some of the pulpits. Unfortunately, they are trying to infiltrate the military and law enforcement forces, which paralyzes the young people. It is here that our propaganda must be strong. Islam is a combative and revolutionary ideology and mysticism is also a truth in Islam, but positive Islam. 'Ali was a mystic but also a struggler. I ask the propaganda organization to pay attention to this issue. This problem must also be studied in the universities. Therefore, we must fight against the accumulation of oppression and corruption in economic terms so that the young people know that our movement is a revolutionary one, and the university must be quite in step with us, as it is. We must not allow certain discontent to appear so that the enemy can take advantage of it.

In conclusion, he referred to the approaching of the month of Ramazan and gave reminders concerning propaganda in mosques and on pulpits and expressed hope that this year will be the year of ultimate victory.

Agenda

After the pre-agenda speeches and readings of the reminders of the representatives, the Majlis went into session and continued discussions on the remaining articles of the bill for sending students abroad, which was carried over from the previous session.

First, Article 4 was read and the proposals concerning this Article were discussed. Latif Nazari proposed an amendment as a note to this article stating that the medical fields should send students abroad who are at the high school diploma level.

Kamaleddin Nikravesh and Dr Zargar spoke as opponent and supporter of this proposal respectively and the speaker of the committee and the representative of the government provided explanations.

Then the proposal of Latif Nazari was put to a vote and was not ratified.

Then Article 4 was read, voted on, and ratified as follows:

Article 4. The ministry is responsible for giving grants to directly send abroad every year a number of graduates with baccalaureate or higher degrees to acquire necessary specialization in needed fields. Also, other ministries and government establishments will extend grants to send abroad students whose education or research will result in obtaining a university degree, and this action will be carried out through the ministry, with consideration for the regulations in this law and the necessity for the acquisition of specializations in needed fields.

Then Articles 5 through 11 were read. Since there were no proposals, they were put to a vote separately and ratified as follows:

Article 5. Private establishments and companies and actual persons, provided they obtain currency by legal means, may allocate up to 2 percent of their currency to send students abroad, observing the conditions and regulations of this law.

Article 6. The ministry is responsible for preparing and announcing a list of the universities throughout the world which have the necessary scientific accreditation and which relatively meet the moral requirements. It must only recognize admissions from and send students subject to this law exclusively to these universities.

Chapter 2. Examination and Selection Procedure for Study Abroad

Article 7. The selection of applicants must be made as follows:

A. The scholarly competence of the individual will be determined on the basis of the applicant's university records and scientific testing. If the number of applicants should exceed the number needed, priority will be given in accordance with scholarly competence.

B. The moral competence of the applicant will be examined with consideration for the regulations of Article 2 by a moral competency committee.

Article 8. The ministry is responsible for establishing foreign language classes for languages that can be taught in Iran as well as the teaching of moral and social issues to students who have passed the examination for studying abroad.

Chapter 3. Educational Costs, Currency Permits and Related Commitments

Article 9. Insofar as the country's needs have not been eliminated and applicants exist who meet the requirements specified in this law, the government is responsible for including the necessary funds for grants and educational loans in the national budget and for anticipating the related currency share.

Note. The level of grants and educational loans as well as the amount of currency for each student engaged in studying abroad will be determined each year with a proposal by the ministry and the approval of the Cabinet.

Article 10. In proportion to the budget level and in observance of the related bylaws, in addition to outstanding students, the government will give grants or educational loans to study abroad to a number of students who do not have the resources for educational expenditures in exchange for official pledges.

Note. All educational grants (including government grants and grants placed at the disposal of the Iranian government by other countries) and educational loans will be given through the ministry.

Article 11. Those who go abroad on government educational grants must pledge and guarantee to serve in a location to be determined by the related ministry for a period of twice the amount of time spent abroad and at most 10 years; those who benefit from educational loans, 1.5 times [the time spent abroad] and at most 8 years; and those who benefit from educational currency, an equal amount of time to that which they have studied abroad and at most 6 years.

Then Article 12 was read and discussed. Hoseyn Harati proposed the omission of Part 1 of this Article, which concerns those students who benefit from educational grants or full loans only engaging in scholarly work.

'Abd Khoda'i and Seyyed Reza Akrami spoke as opponent and supporter of the proposal respectively and the government representative provided explanations. Then the proposal was put to a vote and was not ratified.

Then Articles 12 and 13 were read, put to a vote and ratified as follows:

Article 12. Students who benefit from full grants or loans may only engage in scholarly work. Other students as well may engage in other occupations which are not contrary to Islamic status and duties and which would not detract from their success in studying only upon permission from the supervisory office.

Article 13. Educational currency will be given only to those who have been sent abroad in accordance with the regulations of this law to continue their education.

Note. Students who were sent abroad before the ratification of this law are not subject to this Article, in which case, they are subject to prior regulations.

Then Article 14 was discussed. The defense committee presented an amendment proposal to replace this Article stating that male students who have not completed their military service and who are not considered absent will benefit from educational exemptions in accordance with the regulations.

This proposal faced the opposition and support of Sadeqlu and Movahhedi respectively, and the speaker of the committee and representative of the government provided explanations and expressed their opinions.

Then the defense committee's proposal for an amendment to Article 14 was put to a vote and ratified as follows.

Article 14. Those eligible for military service may be sent abroad, provided they are not absentees, upon giving pledges in accordance with the regulations of the ministry.

Then Article 15 was read and each were separately voted on and ratified as follows [as published].

Chapter 4. Supervision of Students

Article 15. In order to resolve problems and to maintain complete supervision over Iranian students abroad, in accordance with the need, a supervisor or supervisors will be appointed, with one of them as head, and sent to various countries. The supervisors and heads of supervisory offices will be appointed on the suggestion and decree of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Article 16. While observing the interests of foreign policy and in coordination with the agencies of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,, the supervisory offices will be responsible for implementing the instructions and regulations of the Ministry of

Culture and Higher Education in connection with the educational and moral affairs of students.

Note. The administrative and financial relations of the supervisory office will be the responsibility of the agency of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which will be approved by the minister of culture and higher education and the minister of foreign affairs.

Article 17. The requirements for supervisors are as follows:

A. Faith and belief in Islam, religious guardianship, the regime of the Islamic Republic and the Constitution.

B. Piety, which is indicated in performance of the obligatory acts and avoidance of prohibited acts.

C. Married.

D. Holding at least a bachelor's or comparable degree.

E. Sufficient competency to carry out supervisory duties.

F. Necessary familiarity with the university language of the country in which he serves or one of the international languages current in that country.

G. Having at least three years of work experience in educational and cultural affairs.

Note. The ministry may appoint scholars from the theological centers who meet the requirements, with the exception of Paragraph G, as supervisors.

Article 18. The duties of the supervisors are as follows:

A. Helping and guiding students in regards to housing.

B. Studying the scientific and moral situation of the universities in the country in which they serve and preparing necessary annual reports on them for the Ministry of Culture and Higher Education.

C. Supervision over the educational affairs and moral behavior of the students.

D. Sending reports on the educational, moral and behavioral situation of students to the Ministry of Culture and Higher Education every year, six months, or season, in accordance with the educational system of the university of the specific location.

E. Cooperation in obtaining admission for students who are introduced by the Ministry of Culture and Higher Education.

F. Supervision over the moral, ideological and educational situation of other students who study in the location he serves as a supervisor.

G. Students subject to Paragraph F will benefit from other privileges besides the currency privileges, if approved by the supervisory office.

Article 19. The education of individuals who are legal residents of a foreign country is permissible and the supervisory office is responsible for supervising their work.

Article 20. The ministry is responsible, in accordance with the related bylaws, after receiving the reports of the supervisory office and investigating the situation of students who are not morally competent or have not made necessary progress in their education, for taking steps to stop their grants, educational loans or currency with prior warning and for avoiding the extension of their educational exit permits.

Then Article 21 was discussed and Sadeqlu proposed to replace "with the approval of the minister of culture and higher education" with "with the approval of the Cabinet."

Hadi Ghaffari and Hoseyn Harati spoke as opponent and supporter of this proposal respectively. The committee and the representative of the government gave explanations. The proposal was put to a vote and was not ratified.

Then Articles 21 and 22 were read, put to a vote, and ratified as follows:

Article 21. The ministry is responsible for preparing the related bylaws in regards to the following within three months and having it approved by the Ministry of Culture and Higher Education.

1. Educational currency
2. Maximum period of residence and education
3. Going through training and specialization courses
4. Regulations concerning conditionality and repeating courses
5. Issues concerning the educational procedures in foreign universities

6. Regulations concerning the observance of moral and ideological principles

7. Military service eligibility

Article 22. From the date of the ratification of this law, all laws and regulations contrary to this law are null and void.

At 10:05 the open session went into recess.

10,000

CSO: 4640/524

PAKISTAN

SOVIET AMBASSADOR TALKS ABOUT HIS TOUR OF DUTY

GF101416 Lahore NAWA-E WAQT in Urdu 8 May 85 p 8

[Article by staff correspondent]

[Text] Islamabad, 6 May--The Soviet ambassador in Pakistan, Mr Smirnov, said he was satisfied that during his stay in Pakistan, Soviet and Pakistani relations improved and he was leaving the country after 5 years with this feeling of assurance.

He was speaking on the occasion of the Soviet press day celebrations at the local office of the TASS News Agency. He denied the allegation that he had interfered in Pakistan's internal affairs in any way. Mr Smirnov said: my stay in Pakistan was very pleasant and the Pakistani people were very friendly. He prayed for better mutual relations. He said that he was writing a book on Pakistan which he will complete when he returns to the Soviet Union.

In answer to a question he said: the misunderstanding present in Pakistan regarding the Soviet Union can only be removed if Pakistani journalists visit the Soviet Union which will help in removing many misconceptions and contribute to better relations. He added that he was ready to provide all facilities in this regard.

In response to a question on Afghanistan, Mr Smirnov said: The sky is still overcast and then smilingly added that there are certain things he does not wish to divulge but will do so at a future date. He said that he had visited all the famous cities of Pakistan and found the people rather friendly toward the Soviet Union. He said that he cannot reveal certain things as the Pakistani Government will not permit him to do so.

CSO: 4656/131

PAKISTAN

ASGHAR KHAN SPEAKS ON WAR IN AFGHANISTAN

GF142000 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 7 May 85 p 8

[By Correspondent Abdul Sattar Qamar]

[Text] Multan, 6 May--Air Marshal (Retd) Asghar Khan stressed the need for holding direct dialogue with the Kabul government to resolve the issue of Afghan refugees and said the threat to the very existence of Pakistan has now become greater than ever before.

Addressing the high court bar here yesterday, Asghar Khan said the danger had reached its highest-ever point now, because of "wrong and one-sided" foreign policy of the government, particularly on the Afghan issue.

He said Gen Zia himself had revealed on the floor of the national assembly that the new Soviet leader, Mr Gorbachev had warned him against Pakistan's involvement in Afghanistan. He believed that if Pakistan allowed the United States to set up military bases on its territory, the Soviet Union might not hesitate to attack it. Although a stronger Pakistan was in the interest of U.S., if it knew that Pakistan was inclined towards friendly ties with Russia, it would prefer the disintegration of Pakistan rather than its stability.

Asghar Khan said those who imposed martial law would be tried in open court for toppling the constitutional government of Mr Bhutto and violating section 6 of the constitution.

The Tehrik [Tehrik-i-Istiqalal Party] chief said the regime had gagged the press and throttled democracy during the last eight years in the sacred name of Islam.

Asghar Khan said President Zia had no business to tamper with the 1973 constitution and the amendments brought about by one individual did not have any legal or moral force.

He said the irony was that previously there were only 22 families which had ruled Pakistan but now this number had increased to 46. The so-called legislators have spent millions of rupees in getting themselves elected, yet they were mere stooges and absolutely powerless and helpless in taking any positive action. He added that it was natural these persons would not like another election.

Making a case for a citizens' army, the MRD's [Movement for Restoration of Democracy] convener maintained that the present military set up continued to remain colonial. The defence expenditure could be curtailed to meet foreign policy and defence compulsions, he claimed. Asghar Khan said the MRD was not power hungry otherwise, it would be in the 'test-tube cabinet' of General Zia.

He said the government had deprived the people of their rights of free medicare by imposing heavy fees while its bureaucrats, generals and their families go abroad for medical treatment at state expense. He said that Mr Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was hanged to avenge a personal grudge.

Asghar Khan exhorted the nation to struggle with 'sweat, blood and tears' for the transformation of the present archaic, exploitative feudal system into a just, equitable social order. He contended that without achieving such a goal all talk of Islam and its eternal values was just a facade designed to exploit religion to perpetuate the exploiter's hold over the teeming millions.

He eulogised the role played by the ever struggling legal fraternity, the conscientious press, the intelligensia and the self-assertive women, students, labour and peasants for the restoration of their fundamental rights and for democratic, non-exploitative system ensuring freedom of expression.

CSO: 4600/441

PAKISTAN

OPPOSITION LEADER URGES DIRECT TALKS WITH KABUL

GF142010 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 8 May 85 p 8

[Bureau report: "Sherpao for Direct Talks With Kabul"]

[Text] Peshawar, 7 May: Provincial president of the defunct PPP [Pakistan People's Party] Aftab Khan Sherpao has called for an early political solution of the Afghan problem to pave the way for the honourable return of the refugees to their homeland.

Speaking at a reception held in Taragzai near Charsadda, he said that the problem could be solved through direct negotiations with Kabul. Pakistan, he suggested must keep out of the fight between two giants in Afghanistan and for this purpose there was need to change the present trends in foreign policy. He said there should be no doubt that if the foreign policy continued moving in the present direction, the country's integrity would be highly endangered and the frontier province could become "another Beirut."

His party, he claimed, had given this country an independent and correct foreign policy which had helped in the development of pleasant relationships with the neighbouring countries. But as a result of "the blunders committed by the present regime," the situation today was altogether different. Had there been a political and representative government in Pakistan, the problem would have been solved long ago.

The PPP leader said that because of uncertainty, the people had become indifferent, and frustration was mounting. Besides the alarming rise in the cost of living, worsening law and order and increasing corruption created the impression of the government's helplessness. Similarly, he added, unemployment, particularly among the white-collared, had assumed dangerous proportions and the government had totally failed to tackle the problem.

CSO: 4600/441

PAKISTAN

COMMENTARY ON PROJECTED BUDGET DEFICIT FAULTS PLANNING

GF101240 Lahore NAWA-E WAQT in Urdu 4 May 85 p 3

[Editorial: "A 22 Billion Rupee Deficit in the Budget!"]

[Excerpts] It is interesting to debate and pass opinions on the country's economic situation and financial matters on the eve of the presentation of the federal budget for fiscal year 1985-86.

The federal finance and planning minister, Dr Mahbubul Haw, had mentioned a "major problem" some weeks ago. He said that people want taxes halved and sums which are allocated for welfare and development projects doubled. He added that it has put him in quite a dilemma for reconciling these contradictory expectations for which only a magical formula will work. He has consulted people from various walks of life for the past 2 weeks but his first federal budget will only show what plan of action he had devised to solve the financial and economic problems of the country.

According to figures which have been appearing in Islamabad, it seems that there will be a difference of 22 billion rupees which can be covered in two ways. First, more currency could be printed, which would mean that prices would spiral immensely, resulting in increased inflation. Revenue circles opine that the deficit might reach the 19 billion figure in the current fiscal year. The other way is to increase taxes, but this would not be acceptable to the people and would be a source of great trouble to a government which has been formed after 8 years. In other words, a dilemma has now surfaced, regarding which the federal finance minister has mentioned the need for a magic formula.

There is no need to go into the adverse circumstances created by a shortfall in the wheat or cotton harvests. That a country which has been known as the third greatest exporter of cotton in the world should be forced to import cotton for its needs is indicative of a major problem. Similarly, after achieving a degree of self-sufficiency in wheat and exporting its surplus, to be forced to import 20 to 35 lakh tons is no small matter and all the responsibility for it cannot be laid on adverse circumstances, because Pakistan not only has the maximum facilities for agriculture but also has one of the most extensive canal irrigation systems in the world. Hence, the fault lies with our economic planning and performance.

One glaring example of this is that our consumption of shortening is rising rapidly, but due to indifference toward its production or wrong planning, we are spending 6 to 7 billion rupees annually for its import.

Whenever the time for presenting the new federal budget approaches, there is mention of pressure or difficulties in order to prepare the people mentally for an increase in taxes. Now that the federal budget is to be presented to the National Assembly after a lapse of 7 years, we expect the members of the assembly to have done their "homework", especially with regard to the continuing increase in government expenditure, which should be examined in an objective and realistic manner, and how to control the "fence from eating the crops". According to certain circles, this has quadrupled in the past 4 or 5 years. A generous import policy and an enormous increase in smuggling has resulted in difficulties for indigenous factories which cannot find a proper market for their products, while private houses and shops are choked with a glut of foreign goods.

The words "savings" and "economy" have become obsolete in the government's lexicon and as a nation we are becoming accustomed to a superficial way of life. Even the scope of individual savings and private investments is becoming limited because the scale of expenditure on the national level has resulted in obliterating the thin line between what is lawful and what is unlawful. When there is a question of amelioration of the people's lot in the fields of education, health, and social welfare, then "lack of funds" becomes an obstacle; but when there is a major expenditure to be incurred, it seems that "money is no consideration".

If there are some sacrifices to be made on the part of the nation, let them not remain restricted to the taxpayers; the government as well as the privileged strata--who have become accustomed to pocketing only the benefits--must be made to participate equally.

CSO: 4656/131

PAKISTAN

INCREASE IN OIL PRODUCTION REPORTED

GF101812 Rawalpindi PAKISTAN TIMES in English 5 May 85 p 7

[Article by correspondent Iftikhar Butt]

[Text] Pakistan's oil yield has touched about 35,000 barrels a day achieving over 30 percent of self-dependence, a highly placed source told this correspondent.

This compares with the country's crude oil production of only around 12,000 barrels per day at the beginning of 1984 which met about 9 percent of the country's demand. Thus, during the last 18 months, the production and the self-reliance level have increased about three times. The government has as a result of this output saved close to Rs 300 crore in foreign exchange during the last year. The government expects to double the saving during the current year hoping to cut over Rs 600 crore from the current year's oil import budget.

The entire petroleum exploration, refining, marketing, and distribution sectors have been reoriented in the light of international scientific, technical, managerial, and legislative advances. As a result of this, the international oil companies have become greatly interested in exploration of downstream sectors and in expeditious implementation of production programs.

The drilling in the public sector which was averaging about 467 meters a month in the third quarter of 1983 and was on the downward trend, reaching as low as 39 meters [figure as published] in the month of September 1983, jumped to 3,000-4,000 meters a month. The drilling in the private sector which was averaging about 2,400 meters a month in the third quarter of 1983 and had reached a low of 764 meters in the month of August 1983 has also improved considerably and is maintaining an average of over 4,300 meters a month. The overall drilling performance of both the public and private sectors which averaged 2,885 meters a month in the third quarter of 1983 quickly improved to a monthly average of about 6,300 meters in the last quarter of 1983. Comparing the performance in the current year 1984-85 with the last year the overall drilling performance shows a monthly average of 9,284 meters compared to the last year's monthly average of 5,718 meters in the corresponding period. In the public sector alone,

the monthly average in the third quarter of 1984 is 2,547 meters as compared to the monthly average of 476 meters during the same period last year. This accelerated activity has already started to pay dividends in terms of several new discoveries of oil and gas and the increased oil production.

In the Potwar Oil Fields region in the Punjab, the new discovery at Dhurnal in April 1984 has added a new dimension to prospects in the area. In the past oil wells in this area produced a few hundred barrels a day per well. The production of each well from Dhurnal is in the range of 4,000 to 6,000 barrels per day. This discovery has opened up new vistas for oil exploration in an area which in the past was regarded as already having reached its full oil production potential.

During the last year the petroleum sectors new leadership encouraging attitude has, however, led to major and most significant discoveries of oil in the region at Leghari (December 1983), Tajedhi (May 1984), Dabi (October 1984) and Tando Alam (May 1984) and of gas at Golarchi in (January 1984).

CSO: 4600/437

PAKISTAN

BRIEFS

EXPLOSION IN ORDNANCE FACTORY--According to the ASSOCIATED PRESS OF PAKISTAN, six workers were killed and five seriously injured in an explosion in one of the workshops of the Pakistan Ordnance factory at Wah yesterday. The news agency added that a committee of inquiry had been appointed to investigate into the real cause of the explosion. [Text] [Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu 0200 GMT 12 May 85]

CSO: 4656/131

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